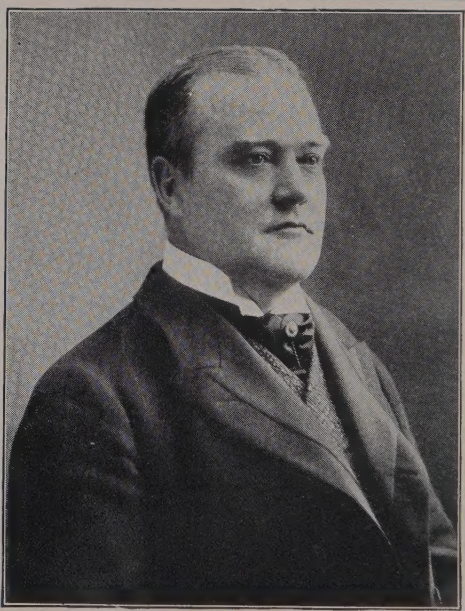

Alfred Henry Lewis

Greatest Short Stories

VOLUME 2

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HOW THE RAVEN DIED

BY ALFRED HENRY LEWIS

HOW THE RAVEN DIED

BY ALFRED HENRY LEWIS

"WHICH if you-all is out to hear of Injuns, son," observed the Old Cattleman, doubtfully, "the best I can do is shet my eyes an' push along regyardless, like a cayouse in a storm of snow. But I don't guarantee no facts; none whatever; I never does bend myse'f to severe study of savages, an' what notions I packs concernin' 'em is the casual frootes of what I accidental hears an' what I sees. It's only now an' then, as I observes former, that Injuns invades Wolfville; an' when they does, we-all scowls 'em outen camp—sort o' makes a sour front, so as to break 'em early of habits of visitin' us. We shore don't hone none to have 'em hankerin' 'round.

"Nacherally, I makes no doubt that if you goes clost to Injuns an' studies their little game you finds some of 'em good an' some bad, some gaudy an' some sedate, some cur'ous an' some indifferent, same as you finds among shore-enough folks. It's so with mules an' broncos; wherefore, then, may not these differences exist among Injuns? Come squar' to the turn, you-all finds white folks separated the same. Some gents fol-

From "Wolfville Nights," copyright, 1902, by Frederick A. Stokes Company.

lows off one wagon track an' some another; some even makes a new trail.

"Speakin' of what's opposite in folks, I one time an' ag'in sees two white chiefs of scouts who frequent comes pirootin' into Wolfville from the Fort. Each has mebby a score of Injuns at his heels who pertains to him personal. One of these scout chiefs is all buckskins, fringes, beads an' feathers from y'ears to hocks, while t'other goes garbed in a stiff hat with a little jim-crow rim—one of them kind you deenom'nates as a darby—an' a diag'nal overcoat; one chief looks like a dime novel on a spree an' t'other as much like the far East as he saveys how. An' yet, son, this voylent person in buckskins is a Second Lootenant—a mere boy, he is—from West P'int; while that outcast in the reedic'lous hat is foaled on the plains an' never does go that clost to the risin' sun as to glimpse the Old Missouri. The last form of maverick bursts frequent into Western bloom; it's their ambition, that a-way, to deloode you into deemin' 'em as fresh from the States as one of them tomatter airtights.

"Thar's old gent Jeffords; he's that sort. Old Jeffords lives for long with the Apaches; he's found among 'em when Gen'ral Crook—the old 'Gray Fox'—an' civilization and Gatlin' guns comes into Arizona arm in arm. I used to note old Jeffords hibernatin' about the Oriental over in Tucson. I shore reckons he's procrastinatin' about thar yet, if the Great Sperit ain't done

called him in. As I says, old Jeffords is that long among the Apaches back in Cochise's time that the mem'ry of man don't run none to the contrary. An' yet no gent ever sees old Jeffords wearin' anything more savage than a long-tail black surtoot an' one of them stove-pipe hats. Is Jeffords dangerous? No, you-all couldn't call him a distinct peril; still, folks who goes devotin' themse'fs to stirrin' Jeffords up jest to see if he's alive gets disastrous action. He has long gray ha'r an' a tangled white beard half-way down his front; an' with that old plug hat an' black coat he's a sight to frighten children or sour milk! Still, Jeffords is all right. As long as towerists an' other inquisitive people don't go pesterin' Jeffords, he shore lets 'em alone. Otherwise, you might as well be up the same saplin' with a cinnamon b'ar; which you'd most likely hear something drop a lot!

"For myse'f, I likes old Jeffords, an' considers him a pleasin' conundrum. About tenth drink time he'd take a cha'r an' go camp by himse'f in a far corner, an' thar he'd warble hymns. Many a time as I files away my nosepaint in the Oriental have I been regaled with

> "'Jesus, Lover of my soul,
> Let me to Thy bosom fly,
> While the nearer waters roll,
> While the tempest still is high,'

as emanatin' from Jeffords where he's r'ared back conductin' some personal services. Folks never

goes buttin' in interferin' with these concerts; which it's cheaper to let him sing.

"Speakin' of Injuns, as I su'gests, I never does see overmuch of 'em in Wolfville. An' my earlier experiences ain't thronged with 'em neither, though while I'm workin' cattle along the Red River I does carom on Injuns more or less. Thar's one old hostile I recalls speshul; he's a fool Injun called Black Feather—Choctaw, he is. This Black Feather's weakness is fire-water; he thinks more of it than some folks does of children.

"Black Feather used to cross over to where Dick Stocton maintains a store an' licker house on the Upper Hawgthief. Of course, no gent sells these Injuns licker. It's ag'in the law; an' onless you-all is onusual eager to make a trip to Fort Smith with a marshal ridin' herd on you doorin' said visit, impartin' of nosepaint to aborigines is a good thing not to do. But Black Feather, he'd come over to Dick Stocton's an' linger 'round the bar'ls of Valley Tan, an' take a chance on stealin' a snifter or two while Stocton's busy.

"At last Stocton gets tired an' allows he'll lay for Black Feather. This yere Stocton is a mighty reckless sport; he ain't carin' much whatever he does do; he hates Injuns an' shotguns, an' loves licker, seven-up, an' sin in any form; them's Stocton's prime characteristics. An' he gets mighty weary of the whiskey-thievin' Black Feather, an' lays for him.

"One evenin' this aggravatin' Black Feather crosses over an' takes to ha'ntin' about Dick Stocton's licker room, as is his wont. It looks like Black Feather has already been buyin' whiskey of one of them boot-laig parties who takes every chance an' goes among the Injuns an' sells 'em nosepaint on the sly. 'Fore ever he shows up on the Upper Hawgthief that time, this Black Feather gets nosepaint some'ers an puts a whole quart of it away in the shade; an' he shore exhibits symptoms. Which for one thing he feels about four stories tall!

"Stocton sets a trap for Black Feather. He fills up the tin cup into which he draws that Valley Tan with coal-oil—karoseen you-all calls it—an' leaves it, temptin' like, settin' on top a whiskey bar'l. Shore! it's the first thing Black Feather notes. He sees his chance an' grabs an' downs the karoseen; an' Stocton sort o' startin' for him, this Black Feather gulps her down plump swift. The next second he cuts loose the yell of that year, burns up about ten acres of land, and starts for Red River. No, I don't know whether the karoseen hurts him none or not; but he certainly goes squatterin' across the old Red River like a wounded wild-duck, an' he never does come back no more.

"But, son, as you sees, I don't know nothin' speshul or much touchin' Injuns, an' if I'm to dodge the disgrace of ramblin' along in this desultory way, I might better shift to a tale I hears

Sioux Sam relate to Doc Peets one time in the Red Light. This Sam is a Sioux, an' a mighty decent buck, considerin' he's Injun; Sam is servin' the Great Father as a scout with the diag'nal-coat, darby-hat sharp I mentions. Peets gives this saddle-tinted longhorn a four-bit piece, an' he tells this yarn. It sounds plenty-childish, but you oughter ba'r in mind that savages' mental ain't no bigger nor older than ten-year-old young ones among the palefaces.

" 'This is the old story my mother tells me,' says Sioux Sam, 'to show me the evils of curiosity. "The Great Sperit allows to every one the right to ask only so many questions," says my mother, "an' when they ask one more than is their right, they die."

" 'This is the story of the fate of *Kaw-kaw-chee,* the Raven, a Sioux chief who died long ago exactly as my mother told me. The Raven died because he asked too many questions an' was too cur'ous. It began when Sublette, who was a trader, came up the *Mitchi-zoor-rah,* the Big-Muddy, an' was robbed by the Raven's people. Sublette was mad at this, an' said next time he would bring the Sioux a present so they would not rob him. So he brought a little cask of fire-water an' left it on the bank of the Big-Muddy. Then Sublette went away, an' twenty of the Raven's young men found the little cask. An' they were greedy an' did not tell the camp; they drank the fire-water where it was found.

" 'The Raven missed his twenty young men an' when he went to spy for them, behold! they were dead, with their teeth locked tight an' their faces an' bodies writhen an' twisted as the whirlwind twists the cottonwoods. Then the Raven thought an' thought; an' he got very cur'ous to know why his young men died so writhen an' twisted. The fire-water had a whirlwind in it, an' the Raven was eager to hear. So he sent for Sublette.

" 'Then the Raven an' Sublette had a big talk. They agreed not to hurt each other; an' Sublette was to come an' go an' trade with the Sioux; an' they would never rob him.

" 'At this, Sublette gave the Raven some of the whirlwind that so killed an' twisted the twenty young men. It was a powder, white; an' it had no smell. Sublette said its taste was bitter; but the Raven must not taste it or it would lock up his teeth an' twist an' kill him. For to swallow the white powder loosed the whirlwind on the man's heart an' it bent him an' twisted him like the storms among the willows.

" 'But the Raven could give the powder to others. So the Raven gave it in some deer's meat to his two squaws; an' they were twisted till they died; an' when they would speak they couldn't, for their teeth were held tight together an' no words came out of their mouths—only a great foam. Then the Raven gave it to others that he did not love; they were twisted an' died. At last there was no more of the powder of the whirl-

wind; the Raven must wait till Sublette came up the Big-Muddy again an' brought him more.

" 'There was a man, the Gray Elk, who was of the Raven's people. The Gray Elk was a *Choo-ayk-eed,* a great prophet. And the Gray Elk had a wife; she was wise an' beautiful, an' her name was Squaw-who-has-dreams. But the Gray Elk called her *Kee-nee-moo-sha,* the Sweetheart.

" 'While the Raven waited for Sublette to bring him more powder of the whirlwind, a star with a long tail came into the sky. This star with the tail made the Raven heap cur'ous. He asked Gray Elk to tell him about it, for he was a prophet. The Raven asked many questions; they fell from him like leaves from a tree in the month of the first ice. So the Gray Elk called *Chee-bee,* the Spirit; an' the Spirit told the Gray Elk. Then the Gray Elk told the Raven.

" 'It was not a tail, it was blood—star blood; an' the star had been bit an' was wounded, but would get well. The Sun was the father of the stars, an' the Moon was their mother. The Sun, *Gheezis,* tried ever to pursue an' capture an' eat his children, the stars. So the stars all ran an' hid when the Sun was about. But the stars loved their mother who was good an' never hurt them; an' when the Sun went to sleep at night an' *Coush-ee-wan,* the Darkness, shut his eyes, the Moon an' her children came together to see each other. But the star that bled had been caught by the Sun; it got out of his mouth, but was

wounded. Now it was frightened, so it always kept its face to where the Sun was sleeping over in the west. The bleeding star, *Sch-coo-dah,* would get well an' its wound would heal.

" 'Then the Raven wanted to know how the Gray Elk knew all this. An' the Gray Elk had the Raven into the medicine lodge that night; an' the Raven heard the spirits come about an' heard their voices; but he could not understand. Also, the Raven saw a wolf all fire, with wings like the eagle which flew overhead. Also he heard the Thunder, *Boom-wa-wa,* talking with the Gray Elk; but the Raven couldn't understand. The Gray Elk told the Raven to draw his knife an' stab with it in the air outside the medicine lodge. An' when he did, the Raven's blade an' hand came back covered with blood. Still, the Raven was cur'ous an' kept askin' to be told how the Gray Elk knew these things. An' the Gray Elk at last took the Raven to the Great Bachelor Sycamore that lived alone, an' asked the Raven if the Bachelor Sycamore was growing. An' the Raven said it was. Then Gray Elk asked him how he knew it was growing. An' the Raven said he didn't know. Then Gray Elk said he did not know how he knew about *Sch-coo-dah,* the star that was bit. This made the Raven angry, for he was very cur'ous; an' he thought the Gray Elk had two tongues.

" 'Then it came the month of the first young grass an' Sublette was back for furs. Also he

brought many goods; an' he gave to the Raven more of the powder of the whirlwind in a little box. At once the Raven made a feast of ducks for the Gray Elk; an' he gave him of the whirlwind powder; an' at once his teeth came together an' the Gray Elk was twisted till he died.

" 'Now no one knew that the Raven had the powder of the whirlwind, so they could not tell why all these people were twisted and went to the Great Spirit. But the Squaw-who-has-dreams saw that it was the Raven who killed her husband, the Gray Elk, in a vision. Then the Squaw-who-has-dreams went into the mountains four days an' talked with *Moh-kwa,* the Bear who is the wisest of the beasts. The Bear said it was the Raven who killed the Gray Elk an' told the Squaw-who-has-dreams of the powder of the whirlwind.

" 'Then the Bear an' the Squaw-who-has-dreams made a fire an' smoked an' laid a plot. The Bear did not know where to find the powder of the whirlwind which the Raven kept always in a secret place. But the Bear told the Squaw-who-has-dreams that she should marry the Raven an' watch until she found where the powder of the whirlwind was kept in its secret place; an' then she was to give some to the Raven, an' he, too, would be twisted an' die. There was a great danger, though; the Raven would, after the one day when they were wedded, want to kill the Squaw-who-has-dreams. So to protect her, the

Bear told her she must begin to tell the Raven the moment she was married to him the Story-that-never-ends. Then, because the Raven was more cur'ous than even he was cruel, he would put off an' put off giving the powder of the whirlwind to the Squaw-who-has-dreams, hoping to hear the end of the Story-that-never-ends. Meanwhile the Squaw-who-has-dreams was to watch the Raven until she found the powder of the whirlwind in its secret place.

" 'Then the wise Bear gave the Squaw-who-has-dreams a bowlful of words as seed, so she might plant them an' raise a crop of talk to tell the Story-that-never-ends. An' the Squaw-who-has-dreams planted the seed-words, an' they grew an' grew, an' she gathered sixteen bundles of talk an' brought them to her wigwam. After that she put beads in her hair, an' dyed her lips red, an' rubbed red on her cheeks, an' put on a new blanket; an' when the Raven saw her, he asked her to marry him. So they were wedded; an' the Squaw-who-has-dreams went to the teepee of the Raven an' was his wife.

" 'But the Raven was old an' cunning like *Yah-mee-kee,* the Beaver, an' he said, "He is not wise who keeps a squaw too long!" An' with that he thought he would kill the Squaw-who-has-dreams the next day with the powder of the whirlwind. But the Squaw-who-has-dreams first told the Raven that she hated *When-dee-goo,* the Giant; an' that she should not love the Raven

until he had killed *When-dee-goo.* She knew the Giant was too big an' strong for the Raven to kill with his lance, an' that he must get his powder of the whirlwind; she would watch him an' learn its secret place. The Raven said he would kill the Giant as the sun went down next day.

" 'Then the Squaw-who-has-dreams told the Raven the first of the Story-that-never-ends an' used up one bundle of talk; an' when the story ended for that night, the Squaw-who-has-dreams was saying: "An' so, out of the lake that was red as the sun came a great fish that was green, with yellow wings, an' it walked also with feet, an' it came up to me an' said:" But then she would tell no more that night nor could the Raven, who was crazy with cur'osity, prevail on her. "I must now sleep an' dream what the green fish with the yellow wings said," was the reply of the Squaw-who-has-dreams, an' she pretended to slumber. So the Raven, because he was cur'ous, put off her death.

" 'All night she watched, but the Raven did not go to the secret place where he had hidden the powder of the whirlwind. Nor the next day, when the sun went down, did the Raven kill the Giant. But the Squaw-who-has-dreams took up again the Story-that-never-ends an' told what the green fish with the yellow wings said; an' she used up the second bundle of talk. When she ceased for that time, the Squaw-who-has-dreams was

saying: "An' as night fell, *Moh-kwa,* the Bear, called to me from his canyon, an' said for me to come an' he would show me where the treasure of fire-water was buried for you who are the Raven. So I went into the canyon, an' *Moh-kwa,* the Bear, took me by the hand an' led me to the treasure of fire-water which was greater an' richer than was ever seen by any Sioux."

" 'Then the Squaw-who-has-dreams would tell no more that night, while the Raven eat his fingers with cur'osity. But he made up a new plan not to twist the Squaw-who-has-dreams until she showed him the treasure of fire-water an' told him the end of the Story-that-never-ends. On her part, however, the Squaw-who-has-dreams, as she went to sleep, wept an' tore the beads from her hair an' said the Raven did not love her, for he had not killed the Giant, as he promised. She said she would tell no more of the Story-that-never-ends until the Giant was dead; nor would she show to a husband who did not love her the great treasure of fire-water which *Moh-kwa,* the Bear, had found. At this, the Raven, who was hot to have the treasure of fire-water an' whose ears rang with cur'osity to hear the end of the Story-that-never-ends, saw that he must kill the Giant. Therefore, when the Squaw-who-has-dreams had ceased to sob and revile him, an' was gone as he thought asleep, the Raven went to his secret place where he kept the powder of the whirlwind an' took a little and wrapped it in a

leaf an' hid the leaf in the braids of his long hair. Then the Raven went to sleep.

" 'When the Raven was asleep the Squaw-who-has-dreams went also herself to the secret place an' got also a little of the powder of the whirlwind. An' the next morning she arose early an' gave the powder of the whirlwind to the Raven on the roast buffalo, the *Pez-hee-kee,* which was his food.

" 'When the raven had eaten, the Squaw-who-has-dreams went out of the teepee among the people an' called all the Sioux to come an' see the Raven die. So the Sioux came gladly, an' the Raven was twisted an' writhen with the powder of the whirlwind wrenching at his heart; an' his teeth were tight like a trap; an' no words, but only foam, came from his mouth; an' at last the Spirit, the *Chee-bee,* was twisted out of the Raven; an' the Squaw-who-has-dreams was revenged for the death of the Gray Elk whom she loved an' who always called her *Kee-nee-moo-sha,* the Sweetheart, because it made her laugh.

" 'When the Raven was dead, the Squaw-who-has-dreams went to the secret place an' threw the powder of the whirlwind into the Big-Muddy; an' after that she distributed her fourteen bundles of talk that were left among all the Sioux so that everybody could tell how glad he felt because the Raven was twisted and died. An' for a week there was nothing but happiness an' big talk among the Sioux; an' *Moh-kwa,* the Bear, came

laughing out of his canyon with the wonder of listening to it; while the Squaw-who-has-dreams now, when her revenge was done, went with *When-dee-goo,* the Giant, to his teepee and became his squaw. So now everything was ended save the Story-that-never-ends.'

"When Sioux Sam gets this far," concluded the Old Cattleman, "he says, 'an' my mother's words at the end were: An' boys who ask too many questions will die, as did the Raven whose cur'osity was even greater than his cruelty.' "

THE BRIGADE COMMANDER

BY J. W. DE FOREST

THE BRIGADE COMMANDER

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THE Colonel was the idol of his bragging old regiment and of the bragging brigade which for the last six months he had commanded.

He was the idol, not because he was good and gracious, not because he spared his soldiers or treated them as fellow-citizens, but because he had led them to victory and made them famous. If a man will win battles and give his brigade a right to brag loudly of its doings, he may have its admiration and even its enthusiastic devotion, though he be as pitiless and as wicked as Lucifer.

"It's nothin' to me what the Currnell is in prrivit, so long as he shows us how to whack the rrebs," said Major Gahogan, commandant of the "Old Tenth." "Moses saw God in the burrnin' bussh, an' bowed down to it, an' worrshipt it. It wasn't the bussh he worrshipt; it was his God that was in it. An' I worrship this villin of a Currnell (if he is a villin) because he's almighty and gives us the vict'ry. He's nothin' but a human burrnin' bussh, perhaps, but he's got the god of war in um. Adjetant

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Wallis, it's a —— long time between dhrinks, as I think ye was sayin', an' with rayson. See if ye can't confiscate a canteen of whiskee somewhere in the camp. Bedad, if I can't buy it I'll stale it. We're goin' to fight tomorry, an' it may be it's the last chance we'll have for a dhrink, unless there's more lik'r now in the other worrld than Dives got."

The brigade was bivouacked in some invisible region, amid the damp, misty darkness of a September night. The men lay in their ranks, each with his feet to the front and his head rearward, each covered by his overcoat and pillowed upon his haversack, each with his loaded rifle nestled close beside him. Asleep as they were, or dropping placidly into slumber, they were ready to start in order to their feet and pour out the red light and harsh roar of combat. There were two lines of battle, each of three regiments of infantry, the first some two hundred yards in advance of the second. In the space between them lay two four-gun batteries, one of them brass twelve-pounder "Napoleons," and the other rifled Parrotts. To the rear of the infantry were the recumbent troopers and picketed horses of a regiment of cavalry. All around, in the far, black distance, invisible and inaudible, paced or watched stealthily the sentinels of the grand guards.

There was not a fire, not a torch, nor a starbeam in the whole bivouac to guide the feet of

Adjutant Wallis in his pilgrimage after whiskey. The orders from brigade headquarters had been strict against illuminations, for the Confederates were near at hand in force, and a surprise was proposed as well as feared. A tired and sleepy youngster, almost dropping with the heavy somnolence of wearied adolescence, he stumbled on through the trials of an undiscernible and unfamiliar footing, lifting his heavy riding-boots sluggishly over imaginary obstacles, and fearing the while lest his toil were labor misspent. It was a dry camp, he felt dolefully certain, or there would have been more noise in it. He fell over a sleeping sergeant, and said to him hastily, "Steady, man—a friend!" as the half-roused soldier clutched his rifle. Then he found a lieutenant, and shook him in vain; further on a captain, and exchanged saddening murmurs with him; further still a camp-follower of African extraction, and blasphemed him.

"It's a God-forsaken camp, and there isn't a horn in it," said Adjutant Wallis to himself as he pursued his groping journey. "Bet you I don't find the first drop," he continued, for he was a betting boy, and frequently argued by wagers, even with himself. "Bet you two to one I don't. Bet you three to one—ten to one."

Then he saw, an indefinite distance beyond him, burning like red-hot iron through the darkness, a little scarlet or crimson gleam, as of a lighted cigar.

"That's Old Grumps, of the Bloody Fourteenth," he thought. "I've raided into his happy sleeping-grounds. I'll draw on him."

But Old Grumps, otherwise Colonel Lafayette Gildersleeve, had no rations—that is, no whiskey.

"How do you suppose an officer is to have a drink, Lieutenant?" he grumbled. "Don't you know that our would-be Brigadier sent all the commissary to the rear day before yesterday? A canteenful can't last two days. Mine went empty about five minutes ago."

"Oh, thunder!" groaned Wallis, saddened by that saddest of all thoughts, "Too late!" "Well, least said soonest mended. I must wobble back to my Major."

"He'll send you off to some other camp as dry as this one. Wait ten minutes, and he'll be asleep. Lie down on my blanket and light your pipe. I want to talk to you about official business—about our would-be Brigadier."

"Oh, *your* turn will come some day," mumbled Wallis, remembering Gildersleeve's jealousy of the brigade commander—a jealousy which only gave tongue when aroused by "commissary." "If you do as well as usual to-morrow you can have your own brigade."

"I suppose you think we are all going to do well to-morrow," scoffed Old Grumps, whose utterance by this time stumbled. "I suppose you expect to whip and to have a good time. I suppose you brag on fighting and enjoy it."

"I like it well enough when it goes right; and it generally does go right with this brigade. I should like it better if the rebs would fire higher and break quicker."

"That depends on the way those are commanded whose business it is to break them," growled Old Grumps. I don't say but what we are rightly commanded," he added, remembering his duty to superiors. "I concede and acknowledge that our would-be Brigadier knows his military business. But the blessing of God, Wallis! I believe in Waldron as a soldier. But as a man and a Christian, faugh!"

Gildersleeve had clearly emptied his canteen unassisted; he never talked about Christianity when perfectly sober.

"What was your last remark?" inquired Wallis, taking his pipe from his mouth to grin. Even a superior officer might be chaffed a little in the darkness.

"I made no last remark," asserted the Colonel with dignity. "I'm not a-dying yet. If I said anything last it was a mere exclamation of disgust—the disgust of an officer and gentleman. I suppose you know something about our would-be Brigadier. I suppose you think you know something about him."

"Bet you I know *all* about him," affirmed Wallis. "He enlisted in the Old Tenth as a common soldier. Before he had been a week in camp they found that he knew his biz, and they

made him a sergeant. Before we started for the field the Governor got his eye on him and shoved him into a lieutenancy. The first battle h'isted him to a captain. And the second—bang! whiz! he shot up to colonel right over the heads of everybody, line and field. Nobody in the Old Tenth grumbled. They saw that he knew his biz. I know *all* about him. What'll you bet?"

"I'm not a betting man, Lieutenant, except in a friendly game of poker," sighed Old Grumps. "You don't know anything about your Brigadier," he added in a sepulchral murmur, the echo of an empty canteen. "I have only been in this brigade a month, and I know more than you do, far, very far more, sorry to say it. He's a reformed clergyman. He's an apostatized minister." The Colonel's voice as he said this was solemn and sad enough to do credit to an undertaker. "It's a bad sort, Wallis," he continued, after another deep sigh, a very highly perfumed one, the sigh of a barkeeper. "When a clergyman falls, he falls for life and eternity, like a woman or an angel. I never knew a backslidden shepherd to come to good. Sooner or later he always goes to the devil, and takes down whomsoever hangs to him."

"He'll take down the Old Tenth, then," asserted Wallis. "It hangs to him. Bet you two to one he takes it along."

"You're right, Adjutant; spoken like a soldier," swore Gildersleeve. "And the Bloody

Fourteenth, too. It will march into the burning pit as far as any regiment; and the whole brigade, yes, sir! But a backslidden shepherd, my God! Have we come to that? I often say to myself, in the solemn hours of the night, as I remember my Sabbath-school days, 'Great Scott! have we come to that?' A reformed clergyman! An apostatized minister! Think of it, Wallis, think of it! Why, sir, his very wife ran away from him. They had but just buried their first boy," pursued Old Grumps, his hoarse voice sinking to a whimper. "They drove home from the burial-place, where lay the new-made grave. Arrived at their door, *he* got out and extended his hand to help *her* out. Instead of accepting, instead of throwing herself into his arms and weeping there, she turned to the coachman and said, 'Driver, drive me to my father's house.' That was the end of their wedded life, Wallis."

The Colonel actually wept at this point, and the maudlin tears were not altogether insincere. His own wife and children he heartily loved, and remembered them now with honest tenderness. At home he was not a drinker and a rough; only amid the hardships and perils of the field.

"That was the end of it, Wallis," he repeated. "And what was it while it lasted? What does a woman leave her husband for? Why does she separate from him over the grave of her innocent first-born? There are twenty reasons, but they must all of them be good ones. I am sorry

to give it as my decided opinion, Wallis, in perfect confidence, that they must all be whopping good ones. Well, that was the beginning; only the beginning. After that he held on for a while, breaking the bread of life to a skedaddling flock, and then he bolted. The next known of him, three years later, he enlisted in your regiment, a smart but seedy recruit, smelling strongly of whiskey."

"I wish I smelt half as strong of it myself," grumbled Wallis. "It might keep out the swamp fever."

"That's the true story of Col. John James Waldron," continued Old Grumps, with a groan which was very somnolent, as if it were a twin to a snore. "That's the true story."

"I don't believe the first word of it—that is to say, Colonel, I think you have been misinformed—and I'll bet you two to one on it. If he was nothing more than a minister, how did he know drill and tactics?"

"Oh, I forgot to say he went through West Point—that is, nearly through. They graduated him in his third year by the back door, Wallis."

"Oh, that was it, was it? He was a West Pointer, was he? Well, then, the backsliding was natural, and oughtn't to count against him. A member of Benny Haven's church has a right to backslide anywhere, especially as the Colonel doesn't seem to be any worse than some of the rest of us, who haven't fallen from grace the

least particle, but took our stand at the start just where we are now. A fellow that begins with a handful of trumps has a right to play a risky game."

"I know what euchered him, Wallis. It was the old Little Joker; and there's another of the same on hand now."

"On hand where? What are you driving at, Colonel?"

"He looks like a boy. I mean she looks like a boy. You know what I mean, Wallis; I mean the boy that makes believe to wait on him. And her brother is in camp, got here to-night. There'll be an explanation to-morrow, and there'll be bloodshed."

"Good-night, Colonel, and sleep it off," said Wallis, rising from the side of a man whom he believed to be sillily drunk and altogether untrustworthy. "You know we get after the rebs at dawn."

"I know it—goo-night, Adjutant—gawblessyou," mumbled Old Grumps. "We'll lick those rebs, won't we?" he chuckled. Goo-night, ole fellow, an' gawblessyou."

Whereupon Old Grumps fell asleep, very absurdly overcome by liquor, we extremely regret to concede, but nobly sure to do his soldierly duty as soon as he should awake.

Stumbling wearily blanketward, Wallis found his Major and regimental commander, the genial and gallant Gahogan, slumbering in a peace like

that of the just. He stretched himself anear, put out his hand to touch his sabre and revolver, drew his caped great-coat over him, moved once to free his back of a root or pebble, glanced languidly at a single struggling star, thought for an instant of his far-away mother, turned his head with a sigh and slept. In the morning he was to fight, and perhaps to die; but the boyish veteran was too seasoned, and also too tired, to mind that; he could mind but one thing—nature's pleading for rest.

In the iron-gray dawn, while the troops were falling dimly and spectrally into line, and he was mounting his horse to be ready for orders, he remembered Gildersleeve's drunken tale concerning the commandant, and laughed aloud. But turning his face toward brigade headquarters (a sylvan region marked out by the branches of a great oak), he was surprised to see a strange officer, a fair young man in captain's uniform, riding slowly toward it.

"Is that the boy's brother?" he said to himself; and in the next instant he had forgotten the whole subject; it was time to form and present the regiment.

Quietly and without tap of drum the small, battle-worn battalions filed out of their bivouacs into the highway, ordered arms and waited for the word to march. With a dull rumble the field-pieces trundled slowly after, and halted in rear of the infantry. The cavalry trotted off cir-

cuitously through the fields, emerged upon a road in advance and likewise halted, all but a single company, which pushed on for half a mile, spreading out as it went into a thin line of skirmishers.

Meanwhile a strange interview took place near the great oak which had sheltered brigade headquarters. As the unknown officer, whom Wallis had noted, approached it, Col. Waldron was standing by his horse ready to mount. The commandant was a man of medium size, fairly handsome in person and features, and apparently about twenty-eight years of age. Perhaps it was the singular breadth of his forehead which made the lower part of his face look so unusually slight and feminine. His eyes were dark hazel, as clear, brilliant, and tender as a girl's, and brimming full of a pensiveness which seemed both loving and melancholy. Few persons, at all events few women, who looked upon him ever looked beyond his eyes. They were very fascinating, and in a man's countenance very strange. They were the kind of eyes which reveal passionate romances, and which make them.

By his side stood a boy, a singularly interesting and beautiful boy, fair-haired and blue-eyed, and delicate in color. When this boy saw the stranger approach he turned as pale as marble, slid away from the brigade commander's side, and disappeared behind a group of staff officers

and orderlies. The new-comer also became deathly white as he glanced after the retreating youth. Then he dismounted, touched his cap slightly and, as if mechanically, advanced a few steps, and said hoarsely, "I believe this is Colonel Waldron. I am Captain Fitz Hugh, of the —th Delaware."

Waldron put his hand to his revolver, withdrew it instantaneously, and stood motionless.

"I am on leave of absence from my regiment, Colonel," continued Fitz Hugh, speaking now with an elaborate ceremoniousness of utterance significant of a struggle to suppress violent emotion. "I suppose you can understand why I made use of it in seeking you."

Waldron hesitated; he stood gazing at the earth with the air of one who represses deep pain; at last, after a profound sigh, he raised his eyes and answered:

"Captain, we are on the eve of a battle. I must attend to my public duties first. After the battle we will settle our private affair."

"There is but one way to settle it, Colonel."

"You shall have your way if you will. You shall do what you will. I only ask what good will it do to *her?*"

"It will do good to *me,* Colonel," whispered Fitz Hugh, suddenly turning crimson. "You forget *me.*"

Waldron's face also flushed, and an angry sparkle shot from under his lashes in reply to

this utterance of hate, but it died out in an instant.

"I have done a wrong, and I will accept the consequences," he said. "I pledge you my word that I will be at your disposal if I survive the battle. Where do you propose to remain meanwhile?"

"I will take the same chance, sir. I propose to do my share in the fighting if you will use me."

"I am short of staff officers. Will you act as my aid?"

"I will, Colonel," bowed Fitz Hugh, with a glance which expressed surprise, and perhaps admiration, at this confidence.

Waldron turned, beckoned his staff officers to approach, and said, "Gentlemen, this is Captain Fitz Hugh of the —th Delaware. He has volunteered to join us for the day, and will act as my aid. And now, Captain, will you ride to the head of the column and order it forward? There will be no drum-beat and no noise. When you have given your order and seen it executed, you will wait for me."

Fitz Hugh saluted, sprang into his saddle and galloped away. A few minutes later the whole column was plodding on silently toward its bloody goal. To a civilian, unaccustomed to scenes of war, the tranquillity of these men would have seemed very wonderful. Many of the soldiers were still munching the hard bread and

raw pork of their meagre breakfasts, or drinking the cold coffee with which they had filled their canteens the day previous. Many more were chatting in an undertone, grumbling over their sore feet and other discomfits, chaffing each other, and laughing. The general bearing, however, was grave, patient, quietly enduring, and one might almost say stolid. You would have said, to judge by their expressions, that these sunburned fellows were merely doing hard work, and thoroughly commonplace work, without a prospect of adventure, and much less of danger. The explanation of this calmness, so brutal perhaps to the eye of a sensitive soul, lies mainly in the fact that they were all veterans, the survivors of marches, privations, maladies, sieges, and battles. Not a regiment present numbered four hundred men, and the average was not above three hundred. The whole force, including artillery and cavalry, might have been about twenty-five hundred sabres and bayonets.

At the beginning of the march Waldron fell into the rear of his staff and mounted orderlies. Then the boy who had fled from Fitz Hugh dropped out of the tramping escort, and rode up to his side.

"Well, Charlie," said Waldron, casting a pitying glance at the yet pallid face and anxious eyes of the youth, "you have had a sad fright. I make you very miserable."

"He has found us at last," murmured Charlie

in a tremulous soprano voice. "What did he say?"

"We are to talk to-morrow. He acts as my aide-de-camp to-day. I ought to tell you frankly that he is not friendly."

"Of course, I knew it," sighed Charlie, while the tears fell.

"It is only one more trouble—one more danger, and perhaps it may pass. So many *have* passed."

"Did you tell him anything to quiet him? Did you tell him that we were married?"

"But we are not married yet, Charlie. We shall be, I hope."

"But you ought to have told him that we were. It might stop him from doing something—mad. Why didn't you tell him so? Why didn't you think of it?"

"My dear little child, we are about to have a battle. I should like to carry some honor and truth into it."

"Where is he?" continued Charlie, unconvinced and unappeased. "I want to see him. Is he at the head of the column? I want to speak to him, just one word. He won't hurt me."

She suddenly spurred her horse, wheeled into the fields, and dashed onward. Fitz Hugh was lounging in his saddle, and sombrely surveying the passing column, when she galloped up to him.

"Carrol!" she said, in a choked voice, reining

in by his side, and leaning forward to touch his sleeve.

He threw one glance at her—a glance of aversion, if not of downright hatred, and turned his back in silence.

"He is my husband, Carrol," she went on rapidly. "I knew you didn't understand it. I ought to have written you about it. I thought I would come and tell you before you did anything absurd. We were married as soon as he heard that his wife was dead."

"What is the use of this?" he muttered hoarsely. "She is not dead. I heard from her a week ago. She was living a week ago."

"Oh, Carrol!" stammered Charlie. "It was some mistake then. Is it possible! And he was so sure! But he can get a divorce, you know. She abandoned him. Or *she* can get one. No, *he* can get it—of course, when she abandoned him. But, Carrol, she *must* be dead—he was *so* sure."

"She is *not* dead, I tell you. And there can be no divorce. Insanity bars all claim to a divorce. She is in an asylum. She had to leave him, and then she went mad."

"Oh, no, Carrol, it is all a mistake; it is not so. Carrol," she murmured in a voice so faint that he could not help glancing at her, half in fury and half in pity. She was slowly falling from her horse. He sprang from his saddle, caught her in his arms, and laid her on the turf, wishing

the while that it covered her grave. Just then one of Waldron's orderlies rode up and exclaimed: "What is the matter with the—the boy? Hullo, Charlie."

Fitz Hugh stared at the man in silence, tempted to tear him from his horse. "The boy is ill," he answered when he recovered his self-command. "Take charge of him yourself." He remounted, rode onward out of sight beyond a thicket, and there waited for the brigade commander, now and then fingering his revolver. As Charlie was being placed in an ambulance by the orderly and a sergeant's wife, Waldron came up, reined in his horse violently, and asked in a furious voice, "Is that boy hurt?

"Ah — fainted," he added immediately. "Thank you, Mrs. Gunner. Take good care of him—the best of care, my dear woman, and don't let him leave you all day."

Further on, when Fitz Hugh silently fell into his escort, he merely glanced at him in a furtive way, and then cantered on rapidly to the head of the cavalry. There he beckoned to the tall, grave, iron-gray Chaplain of the Tenth, and rode with him for nearly an hour, apart, engaged in low and seemingly impassioned discourse. From this interview Mr. Colquhoun returned to the escort with a strangely solemnized, tender countenance, while the commandant, with a more cheerful air than he had yet worn that day, gave himself to his martial duties, inspecting the land-

scape incessantly with his glass, and sending frequently for news to the advance scouts. It may properly be stated here that the Chaplain never divulged to any one the nature of the conversation which he had held with his Colonel.

Nothing further of note occurred until the little army, after two hours of plodding march, wound through a sinuous, wooded ravine, entered a broad, bare, slightly undulating valley, and for the second time halted. Waldron galloped to the summit of a knoll, pointed to a long eminence which faced him some two miles distant, and said tranquilly, "There is our battle-ground."

"Is that the enemy's position?" returned Captain Ives, his adjutant-general. "We shall have a tough job if we go at it from here."

Waldron remained in deep thought for some minutes, meanwhile scanning the ridge and all its surroundings.

"What I want to know," he observed, at last, "is whether they have occupied the wooded knolls in front of their right and around their right flank."

Shortly afterward the commander of the scouting squadron came riding back at a furious pace.

"They are on the hill, Colonel," he shouted.

"Yes, of course," nodded Waldron; "but have they occupied the woods which veil their right front and flank?"

"Not a bit of it; my fellows have cantered all through, and up to the base of the hill."

"Ah!" exclaimed the brigade commander, with a rush of elation. "Then it will be easy work. Go back, Captain, and scatter your men through the wood, and hold it, if possible. Adjutant, call up the regimental commanders at once. I want them to understand my plan fully."

In a few minutes, Gahogan, of the Tenth; Gildersleeve, of the Fourteenth; Peck, of the First; Thomas, of the Seventh; Taylor, of the Eighth, and Colburn, of the Fifth, were gathered around their commander. There, too, was Bradley, the boyish, red-cheeked chief of the artillery; and Stilton, the rough, old, bearded regular, who headed the cavalry. The staff was at hand, also, including Fitz Hugh, who sat his horse a little apart, downcast and sombre and silent, but nevertheless keenly interested. It is worthy of remark, by the way, that Waldron took no special note of him, and did not seem conscious of any disturbing presence. Evil as the man may have been, he was a thoroughly good soldier, and just now he thought but of his duties.

"Gentlemen," he said, "I want you to see your field of battle. The enemy occupy that long ridge. How shall we reach it?"

"I think, if we got at it straight from here, we shan't miss it," promptly judged Old Grumps, his red-oak countenance admirably cheerful and hopeful, and his jealousy all dissolved in the interest of approaching combat.

"Nor they won't miss us nuther," laughed

Major Gahogan. "Betther slide our infantree into thim wuds, push up our skirmishers, play wid our guns for an hour, an' thin rowl in a couple o' col'ms."

There was a general murmur of approval. The limits of volunteer invention in tactics had been reached by Gahogan. The other regimental commanders looked upon him as their superior in the art of war.

"That would be well, Major, if we could do nothing better," said Waldron. "But I do not feel obliged to attack the front seriously at all. The rebels have been thoughtless enough to leave that long semicircle of wooded knolls unoccupied, even by scouts. It stretches from the front of their centre clear around their right flank. I shall use it as a veil to cover us while we get into position. I shall throw out a regiment, a battery, and five companies of cavalry, to make a feint against their centre and left. With the remainder of the brigade I shall skirt the woods, double around the right of the position, and close in upon it front and rear."

"Loike scissors blades upon a snip o' paper," shouted Gahogan, in delight. Then he turned to Fitz Hugh, who happened to be nearest him, and added, "I tell ye he's got the God o' War in um. He's the burnin' bussh of humanity, wid a God o' Battles inside on't."

"But how if they come down on our thin right wing?" asked a cautious officer, Taylor, of the

Eighth. They might smash it and seize our line of retreat."

"Men who have taken up a strong position, a position obviously chosen for defence, rarely quit it promptly for an attack," replied Waldron. "There is not one chance in ten that these gentlemen will make a considerable forward movement early in the fight. Only the greatest geniuses jump from the defensive to the offensive. Besides, we must hold the wood. So long as we hold the wood in front of their centre we save the road."

Then came personal and detailed instructions. Each regimental commander was told whither he should march, the point where he should halt to form line, and the direction by which he should attack. The mass of the command was to advance in marching column toward a knoll where the highway entered and traversed the wood. Some time before reaching it Taylor was to deploy the Eighth to the right, throw out a strong skirmish line and open fire on the enemy's centre and left, supported by the battery of Parrotts, and, if pushed, by five companies of cavalry. The remaining troops would reach the knoll, file to the left under cover of the forest, skirt it for a mile as rapidly as possible, infold the right of the Confederate position, and then move upon it concentrically. Counting from the left, the Tenth, the Seventh, and the Fourteenth were to constitute the first line of battle, while five companies

of cavalry, then the First, and then the Fifth formed the second line. Not until Gahogan might have time to wind into the enemy's right rear should Gildersleeve move out of the wood and commence the real attack.

"You will go straight at the front of their right," said Waldron, with a gay smile, to this latter Colonel. "Send up two companies as skirmishers. The moment they are clearly checked, lead up the other eight in line. It will be rough work. But keep pushing. You won't have fifteen minutes of it before Thomas, on your left, will be climbing the end of the ridge to take the rebels in flank. In fifteen minutes more Gahogan will be running in on their backs. Of course, they will try to change front and meet us. But they have extended their line a long way in order to cover the whole ridge. They will not be quick enough. We shall get hold of their right, and we shall roll them up. Then, Colonel Stilton, I shall expect to see the troopers jumping into the gaps and making prisoners."

"All right, Colonel," answered Stilton in that hoarse growl which is apt to mark the old cavalry officer. "Where shall we find you if we want a fresh order?"

"I shall be with Colburn, in rear of Gildersleeve. That is our centre. But never mind me; you know what the battle is to be, and you know how to fight it. The whole point with the infantry is to fold around the enemy's right, go in

upon it concentrically, smash it, and roll up their line. The cavalry will watch against the infantry being flanked, and when the latter have seized the hill, will charge for prisoners. The artillery will reply to the enemy's guns with shell, and fire grape at any offensive demonstration. You all know your duties, now, gentlemen. Go to your commands, and march!"

The colonels saluted and started off at a gallop. In a few minutes twenty-five hundred men were in simultaneous movement. Five companies of cavalry wheeled into column of companies, and advanced at a trot through the fields, seeking to gain the shelter of the forest. The six infantry regiments slid up alongside of each other, and pushed on in six parallel columns of march, two on the right of the road and four on the left. The artillery, which alone left the highway, followed at a distance of two or three hundred yards. The remaining cavalry made a wide detour to the right as if to flank the enemy's left.

It was a mile and a quarter—it was a march of fully twenty minutes—to the edge of the woodland, the proposed cover of the column. Ten minutes before this point was reached a tiny puff of smoke showed on the brow of the hostile ridge; then, at an interval of several seconds, followed the sound of a distant explosion; then, almost immediately, came the screech of a rifled shell. Every man who heard it swiftly asked himself, "Will it strike *me?*" But even as the words were

thought out it had passed, high in air, clean to the rear, and burst harmlessly. A few faces turned upward and a few eyes glanced backward, as if to see the invisible enemy. But there was no pause in the column; it flowed onward quietly, eagerly, and with business-like precision; it gave forth no sound but the trampling of feet and the muttering of the officers. "Steady, men! Forward, men!"

The Confederates, however, had got their range. A half minute later four puffs of smoke dotted the ridge, and a flight of hoarse humming shrieks tore the air. A little aureole cracked and splintered over the First, followed by loud cries of anguish and a brief, slight confusion. The voice of an officer rose sharply out of the flurry, "Close up, Company A! Forward, men!" The battalion column resumed its even formation in an instant, and tramped unitedly onward, leaving behind it two quivering corpses and a wounded man who tottered rearward.

Then came more screeches, and a shell exploded over the highroad, knocking a gunner lifeless from his carriage. The brigade commander glanced anxiously along his batteries, and addressed a few words to his chief of artillery. Presently the four Napoleons set forward at a gallop for the wood, while the four Parrotts wheeled to the right, deployed, and advanced across the fields, inclining toward the left of the enemy. Next Taylor's regiment (the Eighth)

halted, fronted, faced to the right, and filed off in column of march at a double-quick until it had gained the rear of the Parrotts, when it fronted again, and pushed on in support. A quarter of a mile further on these guns went into battery behind the brow of a little knoll, and opened fire. Four companies of the Eighth spread out to the right as skirmishers, and commenced stealing toward the ridge, from time to time measuring the distance with rifle-balls. The remainder of the regiment lay down in line between the Parrotts and the forest. Far away to the right, five companies of cavalry showed themselves, manœuvring as if they proposed to turn the left flank of the Southerners. The attack on this side was in form and in operation.

Meantime the Confederate fire had divided. Two guns pounded away at Taylor's feint, while two shelled the main column. The latter was struck repeatedly; more than twenty men dropped silent or groaning out of the hurrying files; but the survivors pushed on without faltering and without even caring for the wounded. At last a broad belt of green branches rose between the regiments and the ridge; and the rebel gunners, unable to see their foe, dropped suddenly into silence.

Here it appeared that the road divided. The highway traversed the forest, mounted the slope beyond and dissected the enemy's position, while a branch road turned to the left and skirted the

exterior of the long curve of wooded hillocks. At the fork the battery of Napoleons had halted, and there it was ordered to remain for the present in quiet. There, too, the Fourteenth filed in among the dense greenery, threw out two companies of skirmishers toward the ridge, and pushed slowly after them into the shadows.

"Get sight of the enemy at once!" was Waldron's last word to Gildersleeve. "If they move down the slope, drive them back. But don't commence your attack under half an hour."

Next he filed the Fifth into the thickets, saying to Colburn, "I want you to halt a hundred yards to the left and rear of Gildersleeve. Cover his flank if he is attacked; but otherwise lie quiet. As soon as he charges, move forward to the edge of the wood, and be ready to support him. But make no assault yourself until further orders."

The next two regiments—the Seventh and First—he placed in *échelon,* in like manner, a quarter of a mile further along. Then he galloped forward to the cavalry, and a last word with Stilton. "You and Gahogan must take care of yourselves. Push on four or five hundred yards, and then face to the right. Whatever Gahogan finds let him go at it. If he can't shake it, help him. You two *must* reach the top of the ridge. Only, look out for your left flank. Keep a squadron or two in reserve on that side."

"Currnel, if we don't raich the top of the hill, it'll be because it hasn't got wan," answered

Gahogan. Stilton only laughed and rode forward.

Waldron now returned toward the fork of the road. On the way he sent a staff officer to the Seventh with renewed orders to attack as soon as possible after Gildersleeve. Then another staff officer was hurried forward to Taylor with directions to push his feint strongly, and drive his skirmishers as far up the slope as they could get. A third staff officer set the Parrotts in rear of Taylor to firing with all their might. By the time that the commandant had returned to Colburn's ambushed ranks, no one was with him but his enemy, Fitz Hugh.

"You don't seem to trust me with duty, Colonel," said the young man.

"I shall use you only in case of extremity, Captain," replied Waldron. "We have business to settle to-morrow."

"I ask no favors on that account. I hope you will offer me none."

"In case of need I shall spare no one," declared Waldron.

Then he took out his watch, looked at it impatiently, put it to his ear, restored it to his pocket, and fell into an attitude of deep attention. Evidently his whole mind was on his battle, and he was waiting, watching, yearning for its outburst.

"If he wins this fight," thought Fitz Hugh, "how can I do him a harm? And yet," he added, "how can I help it?"

Minutes passed. Fitz Hugh tried to think of his injury, and to steel himself against his chief. But the roar of battle on the right, and the suspense and imminence of battle on the left, absorbed the attention of even this wounded and angry spirit, as, indeed, they might have absorbed that of any being not more or less than human. A private wrong, insupportable though it might be, seemed so small amid that deadly clamor and awful expectation! Moreover, the intellect which worked so calmly and vigorously by his side, and which alone of all things near appeared able to rule the coming crisis, began to dominate him, in spite of his sense of injury. A thought crossed him to the effect that the great among men are too valuable to be punished for their evil deeds. He turned to the absorbed brigade commander, now not only his ruler, but even his protector, with a feeling that he must accord him a word of peace, a proffer in some form of possible forgiveness and friendship. But the man's face was clouded and stern with responsibility and authority. He seemed at that moment too lofty to be approached with a message of pardon. Fitz Hugh gazed at him with a mixture of profound respect and smothered hate. He gazed, turned away, and remained silent.

Minutes more passed. Then a mounted orderly dashed up at full speed, with the words, "Colonel, Major Gahogan has fronted."

"Has he?" answered Waldron, with a smile

which thanked the trooper and made him happy. "Ride on through the thicket here, my man, and tell Colonel Gildersleeve to push up his skirmishers."

With a thud of hoofs and a rustling of parting foliage the cavalryman disappeared amid the underwood. A minute or two later a thin, dropping rattle of musketry, five hundred yards or so to the front, announced that the sharpshooters of the Fourteenth were at work. Almost immediately there was an angry response, full of the threatenings and execution of death. Through the lofty leafage tore the screech of a shell, bursting with a sharp crash as it passed overhead, and scattering in humming slivers. Then came another, and another, and many more, chasing each other with hoarse hissings through the trembling air, a succession of flying serpents. The enemy doubtless believed that nearly the whole attacking force was massed in the wood around the road, and they had brought at least four guns to bear upon that point, and were working them with the utmost possible rapidity. Presently a large chestnut, not fifty yards from Fitz Hugh, was struck by a shot. The solid trunk, nearly three feet in diameter, parted asunder as if it were the brittlest of vegetable matter. The upper portion started aside with a monstrous groan, dropped in a standing posture to the earth, and then toppled slowly, sublimely prostrate, its branches crashing and all its leaves wail-

ing. Ere long, a little further to the front, another Anak of the forest went down; and, mingled with the noise of its sylvan agony, there arose sharp cries of human suffering. Then Colonel Colburn, a broad-chested and ruddy man of thirty-five, with a look of indignant anxiety in his iron-gray eyes, rode up to the brigade commander.

"This is very annoying, Colonel," he said. "I am losing my men without using them. That last tree fell into my command."

"Are they firing toward our left?" asked Waldron.

"Not a shot."

"Very good," said the chief, with a sigh of contentment. "If we can only keep them occupied in this direction! By the way, let your men lie down under the fallen tree, as far as it will go. It will protect them from others."

Colburn rode back to his regiment. Waldron looked impatiently at his watch. At that moment a fierce burst of line firing arose in front, followed and almost overborne by a long-drawn yell, the scream of charging men. Waldron put up his watch, glanced excitedly at Fitz Hugh, and smiled.

"I must forgive or forget," the latter could not help saying to himself. "All the rest of life is nothing compared with this."

"Captain," said Waldron, "ride off to the left at full speed. As soon as you hear firing at the

shoulder of the ridge, return instantly and let me know."

Fitz Hugh dashed away. Three minutes carried him into perfect peace, beyond the whistling of ball or the screeching of shell. On the right was a tranquil, wide waving of foliage, and on the left a serene landscape of cultivated fields, with here and there an embowered farm-house. Only for the clamor of artillery and musketry far behind him, he could not have believed in the near presence of battle, of blood and suffering and triumphant death. But suddenly he heard to his right, assaulting and slaughtering the tranquillity of nature, a tumultuous outbreak of file firing, mingled with savage yells. He wheeled, drove spurs into his horse, and flew back to Waldron. As he re-entered the wood he met wounded men streaming through it, a few marching alertly upright, many more crouching and groaning, some clinging to their less injured comrades, but all haggard in face and ghastly.

"Are we winning?" he hastily asked of one man who held up a hand with three fingers gone and the bones projecting in sharp spikes through mangled flesh.

"All right, sir; sailing in," was the answer.

"Is the brigade commander all right?" he inquired of another who was winding a bloody handkerchief around his arm.

"Straight ahead, sir; hurrah for Waldron!"

responded the soldier, and almost in the same instant fell lifeless with a fresh ball through his head.

"Hurrah for him!" Fitz Hugh answered frantically, plunging on through the underwood. He found Waldron with Colburn, the two conversing tranquilly in their saddles amid hissing bullets and dropping branches.

"Move your regiment forward now," the brigade commander was saying; "but halt it in the edge of the wood."

"Shan't I relieve Gildersleeve if he gets beaten?" asked the subordinate officer eagerly.

"No. The regiments on the left will help him out. I want your men and Peck's for the fight on top of the hill. Of course the rebels will try to retake it; then I shall call for you."

Fitz Hugh now approached and said, "Colonel, the Seventh has attacked in force."

"Good!" answered Waldron, with that sweet smile of his which thanked people who brought him pleasant news. "I thought I heard his fire. Gahogan will be on their right rear in ten minutes. Then we shall get the ridge. Ride back now to Major Bradley, and tell him to bring his Napoleons through the wood, and set two of them to shelling the enemy's centre. Tell him my idea is to amuse them, and keep them from changing front."

Again Fitz Hugh galloped off as before on a comfortably safe errand, safer at all events than

many errands of that day. "This man is sparing my life," he said to himself. "Would to God I knew how to spare his!"

He found Bradley lunching on a gun caisson, and delivered his orders. "Something to do at last, eh?" laughed the rosy-cheeked youngster. "The smallest favors thankfully received. Won't you take a bite of rebel chicken, Captain? This rebellion must be put down. No? Well, tell the Colonel I am moving on, and John Brown's soul not far ahead."

When Fitz Hugh returned to Waldron he found him outside of the wood, at the base of the long incline which rose into the rebel position. About the slope were scattered prostrate forms, most numerous near the bottom, some crawling slowly rearward, some quiescent. Under the brow of the ridge, decimated and broken into a mere skirmish line sheltered in knots and singly, behind rocks and knolls, and bushes, lay the Fourteenth Regiment, keeping up a steady, slow fire. From the edge above, smokily dim against a pure, blue heaven, answered another rattle of musketry, incessant, obstinate, and spiteful. The combatants on both sides were lying down; otherwise neither party could have lasted ten minutes. From Fitz Hugh's point of view not a Confederate uniform could be seen. But the smoke of their rifles made a long gray line, which was disagreeably visible and permanent; and the sharp *whit! whit!* of their bullets continually

passed him, and cheeped away in the leafage behind.

"Our men can't get on another inch," he ventured to say to his commander. "Wouldn't it be well for me to ride up and say a cheering word?"

"Every battle consists largely in waiting," replied Waldron thoughtfully. "They have undoubtedly brought up a reserve to face Thomas. But when Gahogan strikes the flank of the reserve, we shall win."

"I wish you would take shelter," begged Fitz Hugh. "Everything depends on your life."

"My life has been both a help and a hurt to my fellow-creatures," sighed the brigade commander. "Let come what will to it."

He glanced upward with an expression of profound emotion; he was evidently fighting two battles, an outward and an inward one.

Presently he added, "I think the musketry is increasing on the left. Does it strike you so?"

He was all eagerness again, leaning forward with an air of earnest listening, his face deeply flushed and his eye brilliant. Of a sudden the combat above rose and swelled into higher violence. There was a clamor far away—it seemed nearly a mile away—over the hill. Then the nearer musketry—first Thomas's on the shoulder of the ridge, next Gildersleeve's in front—caught fire and raged with new fury.

Waldron laughed outright. "Gahogan has reached them," he said to one of his staff who had

just rejoined him. "We shall all be up there in five minutes. Tell Colburn to bring on his regiment slowly."

Then, turning to Fitz Hugh, he added, "Captain, we will ride forward."

They set off at a walk, now watching the smoking brow of the eminence, now picking their way among dead and wounded. Suddenly there was a shout above them and a sudden diminution of the firing; and looking upward they saw the men of the Fourteenth running confusedly toward the summit. Without a word the brigade commander struck spurs into his horse and dashed up the long slope at a run, closely followed by his enemy and aid. What they saw when they overtook the straggling, running, panting, screaming pellmell of the Fourteenth was victory!

The entire right wing of the Confederates, attacked on three sides at once, placed at enormous disadvantage, completely outgeneraled, had given way in confusion, was retreating, breaking, and flying. There were lines yet of dirty gray or butternut; but they were few, meagre, fluctuating, and recoiling, and there were scattered and scurrying men in hundreds. Three veteran and gallant regiments had gone all to wreck under the shock of three similar regiments far more intelligently directed. A strong position had been lost because the heroes who held it could not perform the impossible feat of forming successively two fresh fronts under a concentric fire of mus-

ketry. The inferior brain power had confessed the superiority of the stronger one.

On the victorious side there was wild, clamorous, fierce exultation. The hurrying, shouting, firing soldiers, who noted their commander riding among them, swung their rifles or their tattered hats at him, and screamed "Hurrah!" No one thought of the Confederate dead underfoot, nor of the Union dead who dotted the slope behind. "What are you here for, Colonel?" shouted rough old Gildersleeve, one leg of his trousers dripping blood. "We can do it alone."

"It is a battle won," laughed Fitz Hugh, almost worshiping the man whom he had come to slay.

"It is a battle won, but not used," answered Waldron. "We haven't a gun yet, nor a flag. Where is the cavalry? Why isn't Stilton here? He must have got afoul of the enemy's horse, and been obliged to beat it off. Can anybody hear anything of Stilton?"

"Let him go," roared Old Grumps. "The infantry don't want any help."

"Your regiment has suffered, Colonel," answered Waldron, glancing at the scattered files of the Fourteenth. "Halt it and reorganize it, and let it fall in with the right of the First when Peck comes up. I shall replace you with the Fifth. Send your Adjutant back to Colburn and tell him to hurry along. Those fellows are making a new front over there," he added, pointing

to the centre of the hill. "I want the Fifth, Seventh and Tenth in *échelon* as quickly as possible. And I want that cavalry. Lieutenant," turning to one of his staff, "ride off to the left and find Colonel Stilton. Tell him that I need a charge in ten minutes."

Presently cannon opened from that part of the ridge still held by the Confederates, the shell tearing through or over the dissolving groups of their right wing, and cracking viciously above the heads of the victorious Unionists. The explosions followed each other with stunning rapidity, and the shrill whirring of the splinters was ominous. Men began to fall again in the ranks or to drop out of them wounded. Of all this Waldron took no further note than to ride hastily to the brow of the ridge and look for his own artillery.

"See how he attinds to iverything himself," said Major Gahogan, who had cantered up to the side of Fitz Hugh. "It's just a matther of plain business, an' he looks after it loike a business man. Did ye see us, though, Captin, whin we come in on their right flank? By George, we murthered um. There's more'n a hundred lyin' in hapes back there. As for old Stilton, I just caught sight of um behind that wood to our left, an' he's makin' for the enemy's right rair. He'll have lots o' prisoners in half an hour."

When Waldron returned to the group he was told of his cavalry's whereabouts, and responded to the information with a smile of satisfaction.

"Bradley is hurrying up," he said, "and Taylor is pushing their left smartly. They will make one more tussle to recover their line of retreat; but we shall smash them from end to end and take every gun."

He galloped now to his infantry, and gave the word "Forward!" The three regiments which composed the *échelon* were the Fifth on the right, the Seventh fifty yards to the rear and left of the Fifth, the Tenth to the rear and left of the Seventh. It was behind the Fifth, that is, the foremost battalion, that the brigade commander posted himself.

"Do *you* mean to stay here, Colonel?" asked Fitz Hugh, in surprise and anxiety.

"It is a certain victory now," answered Waldron, with a singular glance upward. "My life is no longer important. I prefer to do my duty to the utmost in the sight of all men."

"I shall follow you and do mine, sir," said the Captain, much moved, he could scarcely say by what emotions, they were so many and conflicting.

"I want you otherwheres. Ride to Colonel Taylor at once, and hurry him up the hill. Tell him the enemy have greatly weakened their left. Tell him to push up everything, infantry, and cavalry, and artillery, and to do it in haste."

"Colonel, this is saving my life against my will," remonstrated Fitz Hugh.

"Go!" ordered Waldron, imperiously. "Time is precious."

Fitz Hugh dashed down the slope to the right at a gallop. The brigade commander turned tranquilly, and followed the march of his *échelon*. The second and decisive crisis of the little battle was approaching, and to understand it we must glance at the ground on which it was to be fought. Two hostile lines were marching toward each other along the broad, gently rounded crest of the hill and at right angles to its general course. Between these lines, but much the nearest to the Union troops, a spacious road came up out of the forest in front, crossed the ridge, swept down the smooth decline in rear, and led to a single wooden bridge over a narrow but deep rivulet. On either hand the road was hedged in by a close board fence, four feet or so in height. It was for the possession of this highway that the approaching lines were about to shed their blood. If the Confederates failed to win it all their artillery would be lost, and their army captured or dispersed.

The two parties came on without firing. The soldiers on both sides were veterans, cool, obedient to orders, intelligent through long service, and able to reserve all their resources for a short-range and final struggle. Moreover, the fences as yet partially hid them from each other, and would have rendered all aim for the present vague and uncertain.

"Forward, Fifth!" shouted Waldron. "Steady. Reserve your fire." Then, as the regiment came up to the fence, he added, "Halt; right dress. Steady, men."

Meantime he watched the advancing array with an eager gaze. It was a noble sight, full of moral sublimity, and worthy of all admiration. The long, lean, sunburned, weather-beaten soldiers, in ragged gray stepped forward, superbly, their ranks loose, but swift and firm, the men leaning forward in their haste, their tattered slouch hats pushed backward, their whole aspect business-like and virile. Their line was three battalions strong, far outflanking the Fifth, and at least equal to the entire *échelon*. When within thirty or forty yards of the further fence they increased their pace to nearly a double-quick, many of them stooping low in hunter fashion, and a few firing. Then Waldron rose in his stirrups and yelled, "Battalion! ready—aim—aim low. Fire!"

There was a stunning roar of three hundred and fifty rifles, and a deadly screech of bullets. But the smoke rolled out, the haste to reload was intense, and none could mark what execution was done. Whatever the Confederates may have suffered, they bore up under the volley, and they came on. In another minute each of those fences, not more than twenty-five yards apart, was lined by the shattered fragment of a regiment, each firing as fast as possible into the face of the other.

The Fifth bled fearfully: it had five of its ten company commanders shot dead in three minutes; and its loss in other officers and in men fell scarcely short of this terrible ratio. On its left the Seventh and the Tenth were up, pouring in musketry, and receiving it in a fashion hardly less sanguinary. No one present had ever seen, or ever afterward saw, such another close and deadly contest.

But the strangest thing in this whole wonderful fight was the conduct of the brigade commander. Up and down the rear of the lacerated Fifth Waldron rode thrice, spurring his plunging and wounded horse close to the yelling and fighting file-closers, and shouting in a piercing voice encouragement to his men. Stranger still, considering the character which he had borne in the army, and considering the evil deed for which he was to account on the morrow, were the words which he was distinctly and repeatedly heard to utter. "Stand steady, men—God is with us!" was the extraordinary battle-cry of this backslidden clergyman, this sinner above many.

And it was a prophecy of victory. Bradley ran up his Napoleons on the right in the nick of time, and, although only one of them could be brought to bear, it was enough; the grape raked the Confederate left, broke it, and the battle was over. In five minutes more their whole array was scattered, and the entire position open to galloping cavalry, seizing guns, standards, and prisoners.

It was in the very moment of triumph, just as the stubborn Southern line reeled back from the fence in isolated clusters, that the miraculous immunity of Waldron terminated, and he received his death wound. A quarter of an hour later Fitz Hugh found a sorrowful group of officers gazing from a little distance upon their dying commander.

"Is the Colonel hit?" he asked, shocked and grieved, incredible as the emotion may seem.

"Don't go near him," called Gildersleeve, who, it will be remembered, knew or guessed his errand in camp. "The chaplain and surgeon are there. Let him alone."

"He's going to render his account," added Gahogan. "An' whativer he's done wrong, he's made it square to-day. Let um lave it to his brigade."

Adjutant Wallis, who had been blubbering aloud, who had cursed the rebels and the luck energetically, and who had also been trying to pray inwardly, groaned out, "This is our last victory. You see if it ain't. Bet you two to one."

"Hush, man!" replied Gahogan. "We'll win our share of um, though we'll have to work harder for it. We'll have to do more ourselves, an' get less done for us in the way of tactics."

"That's so, Major," whimpered a drummer, looking up from his duty of attending to a wounded comrade. "He knowed how to put his

men in the right place, and his men knowed when they was in the right place. But it's goin' to be uphill through the steepest part of hell the rest of the way."

Soldiers, some of them weeping, some of them bleeding, arrived constantly to inquire after their commander, only to be sent quietly back to their ranks or to the rear. Around lay other men—dead men, and senseless, groaning men—all for the present unnoticed. Everything, except the distant pursuit of the cavalry, waited for Waldron to die. Fitz Hugh looked on silently with the tears of mingled emotions in his eyes, and with hopes and hatreds expiring in his heart. The surgeon supported the expiring victor's head, while Chaplain Colquhoun knelt beside him, holding his hand and praying audibly. Of a sudden the petition ceased, both bent hastily toward the wounded man, and after what seemed a long time exchanged whispers. Then the Chaplain rose, came slowly toward the now advancing group of officers, his hands outspread toward heaven in an attitude of benediction, and tears running down his haggard white face.

"I trust, dear friends," he said, in a tremulous voice, "that all is well with our brother and commander. His last words were, 'God is with us.'"

"Oh! but, man, *that* isn't well," broke out Gahogan, in a groan. "What did ye pray for his soul for? Why didn't ye pray for his loife?"

Fitz Hugh turned his horse and rode silently away. The next day he was seen journeying rearward by the side of an ambulance, within which lay what seemed a strangely delicate boy, insensible, and, one would say, mortally ill.

THE DENVER EXPRESS

BY A. A. HAYES

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ANY one who has seen an outward-bound clipper ship getting under way, and heard the "shanty-songs" sung by the sailors as they toiled at capstan and halliards, will probably remember that rhymeless but melodious refrain—

"I'm bound to see its muddy waters,
Yeo ho! that rolling river;
Bound to see its muddy waters,
Yeo ho! the wild Missouri."

Only a happy inspiration could have impelled Jack to apply the adjective "wild" to that ill-behaved and disreputable river which, tipsily bearing its enormous burden of mud from the far Northwest, totters, reels, runs its tortuous course for hundreds on hundreds of miles and which, encountering the lordly and thus far well-behaved Mississippi at Alton, and forcing its company upon this splendid river (as if some drunken fellow should lock arms with a dignified pedestrian), contaminates it all the way to the Gulf of Mexico.

At a certain point on the banks of this river, or rather—as it has the habit of abandoning and destroying said banks—at a safe distance there-

From "Belgravia" for January, 1884.

from, there is a town from which a railroad takes its departure, for its long climb up the natural incline of the Great Plains, to the base of the mountains; hence the importance to this town of the large but somewhat shabby building serving as terminal station. In its smoky interior, late in the evening and not very long ago, a train was nearly ready to start. It was a train possessing a certain consideration. For the benefit of a public easily gulled and enamored of grandiloquent terms, it was advertised as the "Denver Fast Express"; sometimes, with strange unfitness, as the "Lightning Express"; "elegant" and "palatial" cars were declared to be included therein; and its departure was one of the great events of the twenty-four hours in the country round about. A local poet described it in the "live" paper of the town, cribbing from an old Eastern magazine and passing off as original the lines—

"Again we stepped into the street,
A train came thundering by,
Drawn by the snorting iron steed
Swifter than eagles fly.
Rumbled the wheels, the whistle shrieked,
Far rolled the smoky cloud,
Echoed the hills, the valleys shook,
The flying forests bowed."

The trainmen, on the other hand, used no fine phrases. They called it simply "Number Seventeen"; and, when it started, said it had "pulled out."

On the evening in question, there it stood,

nearly ready. Just behind the great hissing locomotive, with its parabolic headlight and its coal-laden tender, came the baggage, mail, and express cars; then the passenger coaches, in which the social condition of the occupants seemed to be in inverse ratio to their distance from the engine. First came emigrants, "honest miners," "cowboys," and laborers; Irishmen, Germans, Welshmen, Mennonites from Russia, quaint of garb and speech, and Chinamen. Then came along cars full of people of better station, and last the great Pullman "sleepers," in which the busy black porters were making up the berths for well-to-do travelers of diverse nationalities and occupations.

It was a curious study for a thoughful observer, this motley crowd of human beings sinking all differences of race, creed, and habits in the common purpose to move westward—to the mountain fastnesses, the sage-brush deserts and the Golden Gate.

The warning bell had sounded, and the fireman leaned far out for the signal. The gong struck sharply, the conductor shouted, "All aboard," and raised his hand; the tired ticket-seller shut his window, and the train moved out of the station, gathered way as it cleared the outskirts of the town, rounded a curve, entered on an absolutely straight line, and, with one long whistle from the engine, settled down to its work. Through the night hours it sped on, past lonely

ranches and infrequent stations, by and across shallow streams fringed with cottonwood trees, over the greenish-yellow buffalo grass near the old trail where many a poor emigrant, many a bold frontiersman, many a brave soldier, had laid his bones but a short time before.

Familiar as they may be, there is something strangely impressive about all-night journeys by rail, and those forming part of an American transcontinental trip are almost weird. From the windows of a night express in Europe or the older portions of the United States, one looks on houses and lights, cultivated fields, fences, and hedges; and, hurled as he may be through the darkness, he has a sense of companionship and semi-security. Far different is it when the long train is running over those two rails which, seen before night sets in, seem to meet on the horizon. Within all is as if between two great seaboard cities; the neatly dressed people, the uniformed officials, the handsome fittings, the various appliances for comfort. Without are now long dreary levels, now deep and wild canyons, now an environment of strange and grotesque rock-formations, castles, battlements, churches, statues. The antelope fleetly runs, and the coyote skulks away from the track, and the gray wolf howls afar off. It is for all the world, to one's fancy, as if a bit of civilization, a family or community, its belongings and surroundings complete, were flying through regions barbarous and inhospitable.

From the cab of Engine No. 32, the driver of the Denver Express saw, showing faintly in the early morning, the buildings grouped about the little station ten miles ahead, where breakfast awaited his passengers. He looked at his watch; he had just twenty minutes in which to run the distance, as he had run it often before. Something, however, traveled faster than he. From the smoky station out of which the train passed the night before, along the slender wire stretched on rough poles at the side of the track, a spark of that mysterious something which we call electricity flashed at the moment he returned the watch to his pocket; and in five minutes' time the station-master came out on the platform, a little more thoughtful than his wont, and looked eastward for the smoke of the train. With but three of the passengers in that train has this tale especially to do, and they were all in the new and comfortable Pullman "City of Cheyenne." One was a tall, well-made man of about thirty—blond, blue-eyed, bearded, straight, sinewy, alert. Of all in the train he seemed the most thoroughly at home, and the respectful greeting of the conductor, as he passed through the car, marked him as an officer of the road. Such was he—Henry Sinclair, assistant engineer, quite famed on the line, high in favor with the directors, and a rising man in all ways. It was known on the road that he was expected in Denver, and there were rumors that he was to organize the parties for the survey

of an important "extension." Beside him sat his pretty young wife. She was a New Yorker—one could tell at first glance—from the feather of her little bonnet, matching the gray traveling dress, to the tips of her dainty boots; and one, too, at whom old Fifth Avenue promenaders would have turned to look. She had a charming figure, brown hair, hazel eyes, and an expression at once kind, intelligent, and spirited. She had cheerfully left a luxurious home to follow the young engineer's fortunes; and it was well known that those fortunes had been materially advanced by her tact and cleverness.

The third passenger in question had just been in conversation with Sinclair and the latter was telling his wife of their curious meeting. Entering the toilet-room at the rear of the car, he said, he had begun his ablutions by the side of another man, and it was as they were sluicing their faces with water that he heard the cry:

"Why, Major, is that you? Just to think of meeting you here!"

A man of about twenty-eight years of age, slight, muscular, wiry, had seized his wet hand and was wringing it. He had black eyes, keen and bright, swarthy complexion, black hair and mustache. A keen observer might have seen about him some signs of a *jeunesse orageuse,* but his manner was frank and pleasing. Sinclair looked him in the face, puzzled for a moment.

"Don't you remember Foster?" asked the man.

"Of course I do," replied Sinclair. "For a moment I could not place you. Where have you been and what have you been doing?"

"Oh," replied Foster, laughing, "I've braced up and turned over a new leaf. I'm a respectable member of society, have a place in the express company, and am going to Denver to take charge."

"I am very glad to hear it, and you must tell me your story when we have had our breakfast."

The pretty young woman was just about to ask who Foster was, when the speed of the train slackened, and the brakeman opened the door of the car and cried out in stentorian tones:

"Pawnee Junction; twenty minutes for refreshments!"

II

When the celebrated Rocky Mountain gold excitement broke out, more than twenty years ago, and people painted "PIKE'S PEAK OR BUST" on the canvas covers of their wagons and started for the diggings, they established a "trail" or "trace" leading in a southwesterly direction from the old one to California.

At a certain point on this trail a frontiersman named Barker built a forlorn ranch-house and *corral,* and offered what is conventionally called "entertainment for man and beast."

For years he lived there, dividing his time between fighting the Indians and feeding the pass-

ing emigrants and their stock. Then the first railroad to Denver was built, taking another route from the Missouri, and Barker's occupation was gone. He retired with his gains to St. Louis and lived in comfort.

Years passed on, and the "extension" over which our train is to pass was planned. The old pioneers were excellent natural engineers and their successors could find no better route than they had chosen. Thus it was that "Barker's" became, during the construction period, an important point, and the frontiersman's name came to figure on time-tables. Meanwhile the place passed through a process of evolution which would have delighted Darwin. In the party of engineers which first camped there was Sinclair, and it was by his advice that the contractors selected it for division headquarters. Then came drinking "saloons" and gambling houses—alike the inevitable concomitant and the bane of Western settlements; then scattered houses and shops and a shabby so-called hotel, in which the letting of miserable rooms (divided from each other by canvas partitions) was wholly subordinated to the business of the bar. Before long, Barker's had acquired a worse reputation than even other towns of its type, the abnormal and uncanny aggregations of squalor and vice which dotted the plains in those days; and it was at its worst when Sinclair returned thither and took up his quarters in the engineers' building. The passion for

gambling was raging, and to pander thereto were collected as choice a lot of desperadoes as ever "stacked" cards or loaded dice. It came to be noticed that they were on excellent terms with a man called "Jeff" Johnson, who was lessee of the hotel; and to be suspected that said Johnson, in local parlance, "stood in with" them. With this man had come to Barker's his daughter Sarah, commonly known as "Sally," a handsome girl, with a straight, lithe figure, fine features, reddish auburn hair, and dark-blue eyes. It is but fair to say that even the "toughs" of a place like Barker's show some respect for the other sex, and Miss Sally's case was no exception to the rule. The male population admired her; they said she "put on heaps of style"; but none of them had seemed to make any progress in her good graces.

On a pleasant afternoon just after the track had been laid some miles west of Barker's, and construction trains were running with some regularity to and from the end thereof, Sinclair sat on the rude veranda of the engineers' quarters, smoking his well-colored meerschaum and looking at the sunset. The atmosphere had been so clear during the day that glimpses were had of Long's and Pike's peaks, and as the young engineer gazed at the gorgeous cloud display he was thinking of the miners' quaint and pathetic idea that the dead "go over the Range."

"Nice-looking, ain't it, Major?" asked a voice

at his elbow, and he turned to see one of the contractors' officials taking a seat near him.

"More than nice-looking to my mind, Sam," he replied. "What is the news to-day?"

"Nothin' much. There's a sight of talk about the doin's of them faro an' keno sharps. The boys is gettin' kind o' riled, fur they allow the game ain't on the square wuth a cent. Some of 'em down to the tie-camp wuz a-talkin' about a vigilance committee, an' I wouldn't be surprised ef they meant business. Hev yer heard about the young feller that come in a week ago from Laramie an' set up a new faro-bank?"

"No. What about him?"

"Wa'al, yer see he's a feller thet's got a lot of sand an' ain't afeard of nobody, an' he's allowed to hev the deal to his place on the square every time. Accordin' to my idee, gamblin's about the wust racket a feller kin work, but it takes all sorts of men to make a world, an' ef the boys is bound to hev a game, I calkilate they'd like to patronize his bank. Thet's made the old crowd mighty mad an' they're a-talkin' about puttin' up a job of cheatin' on him an' then stringin' him up. Besides, I kind o' think there's some cussed jealousy on another lay as comes in. Yer see the young feller—Cyrus Foster's his name—is sweet on thet gal of Jeff Johnson's. Jeff was to Laramie before he come here, an' Foster knowed Sally up thar. I allow he moved here to see her. Hello! Ef thar they ain't a-coming now."

Down a path leading from the town past the railroad buildings, and well on the prairie, Sinclair saw the girl walking with the "young feller." He was talking earnestly to her and her eyes were cast down. She looked pretty and, in a way, graceful; and there was in her attire a noticeable attempt at neatness, and a faint reminiscence of bygone fashions. A smile came to Sinclair's lips as he thought of a couple walking up Fifth Avenue during his leave of absence not many months before, and of a letter many times read, lying at that moment in his breast-pocket.

"Papa's bark is worse than his bite," ran one of its sentences. "Of course he does not like the idea of my leaving him and going away to such dreadful and remote places as Denver and Omaha and I don't know what else; but he will not oppose me in the end, and when you come on again—"

"By thunder!" exclaimed Sam; "ef thar ain't one of them cussed sharps a-watchin' 'em."

Sure enough a rough-looking fellow, his hat pulled over his eyes, half concealed behind a pile of lumber, was casting a sinister glance toward the pair.

"The gal's well enough," continued Sam; "but I don't take a cent's wuth of stock in thet thar father of her'n. He's in with them sharps, sure pop, an' it don't suit his book to hev Foster hangin' round. It's ten to one he sent that cuss to watch 'em. Wa'al, they're a queer lot, an' I'm

afeared thar's plenty of trouble ahead among 'em. Good luck to you, Major," and he pushed back his chair and walked away.

After breakfast next morning, when Sinclair was sitting at the table in his office, busy with maps and plans, the door was thrown open, and Foster, panting for breath, ran in.

"Major Sinclair," he said, speaking with difficulty, "I've no claim on you, but I ask you to protect me. The other gamblers are going to hang me. They are more than ten to one. They will track me here; unless you harbor me, I'm a dead man."

Sinclair rose from his chair in a second and walked to the window. A party of men were approaching the building. He turned to Foster:

"I do not like your trade," said he; "but I will not see you murdered if I can help it. You are welcome here." Foster said "Thank you," stood still a moment, and then began to pace the room, rapidly clinching his hands, his whole frame quivering, his eyes flashing fire—"for all the world," Sinclair said, in telling the story afterward, "like a fierce caged tiger."

"My God!" he muttered, with concentrated intensity, "to be *trapped,* TRAPPED like this!"

Sinclair stepped quickly to the door of his bedroom and motioned Foster to enter. Then there came a knock at the outer door, and he opened it and stood on the threshold erect and firm. Half a dozen "toughs" faced him.

"Major," said their spokesman, "we want that man."

"You can not have him, boys."

"Major, we're a-goin' to take him."

"You had better not try," said Sinclair, with perfect ease and self-possession, and in a pleasant voice. "I have given him shelter, and you can only get him over my dead body. Of course you can kill me, but you won't do even that without one or two of you going down; and then you know perfectly well, boys, what will happen. You *know* that if you lay your finger on a railroad man it's all up with you. There are five hundred men in the tie-camp, not five miles away, and you don't need to be told that in less than one hour after they get word there won't be a piece of one of you big enough to bury."

The men made no reply. They looked him straight in the eyes for a moment. Had they seen a sign of flinching they might have risked the issue, but there was none. With muttered curses, they slunk away. Sinclair shut and bolted the door, then opened the one leading to the bedroom.

"Foster," he said, "the train will pass here in half an hour. Have you money enough?"

"Plenty, Major."

"Very well; keep perfectly quiet and I will try to get you safely off." He went to an adjoining room and called Sam, the contractor's man. He took in the situation at a glance.

"Wa'al Foster," said he, "kind o' 'close call' for yer, warn't it? Guess yer'd better be gittin' up an' gittin' pretty lively. The train boys will take yer through an' yer kin come back when this racket's worked out."

Sinclair glanced at his watch, then he walked to the window and looked out. On a small *mesa,* or elevated plateau, commanding the path to the railroad, he saw a number of men with rifles.

"Just as I expected," said he. "Sam, ask one of the boys to go down to the track and, when the train arrives, tell the conductor to come here."

In a few minutes the whistle was heard and the conductor entered the building. Receiving his instructions, he returned, and immediately on engine, tender, and platform appeared the trainmen, with *their* rifles covering the group on the bluff. Sinclair put on his hat.

"Now, Foster," said he, "we have no time to lose. Take Sam's arm and mine, and walk between us."

The trio left the building and walked deliberately to the railroad. Not a word was spoken. Besides the men in sight on the train, two behind the window-blinds of the one passenger coach, and unseen, kept their fingers on the triggers of their repeating carbines. It seemed a long time, counted by anxious seconds, until Foster was safe in the coach.

"All ready, conductor," said Sinclair. "Now, Foster, good-by. I am not good at lecturing,

but if I were you, I would make this the turning-point in my life."

Foster was much moved.

"I will do it, Major," said he; "and I shall never forget what you have done for me to-day. I am sure we shall meet again."

With another shriek from the whistle the train started. Sinclair and Sam saw the men quietly returning the firearms to their places as it gathered way. Then they walked back to their quarters. The men on the *mesa,* balked of their purpose, had withdrawn.

Sam accompanied Sinclair to his door, and then sententiously remarked: "Major, I think I'll light out and find some of the boys. You ain't got no call to know anything about it, but I allow it's about time them cusses was bounced."

Three nights after this, a powerful party of *Vigilantes,* stern and inexorable, made a raid on all the gambling dens, broke the tables and apparatus, and conducted the men to a distance from the town, where they left them with an emphatic and concise warning as to the consequences of any attempt to return. An exception was made in Jeff Johnson's case—but only for the sake of his daughter—for it was found that many a "little game" had been carried on in his house.

Ere long he found it convenient to sell his business and retire to a town some miles to the eastward, where the railroad influence was not as

strong as at Barker's. At about this time, Sinclair made his arrangements to go to New York, with the pleasant prospect of marrying the young lady in Fifth Avenue. In due time he arrived at Barker's with his young and charming wife and remained for some days. The changes were astounding. Commonplace respectability had replaced abnormal lawlessness. A neat station stood where had been the rough contractor's buildings. At a new "Windsor" (or was it "Brunswick"?) the performance of the kitchen contrasted sadly (alas! how common is such contrast in these regions) with the promise of the *menu*. There was a tawdry theatre yclept "Academy of Music," and there was not much to choose in the way of ugliness between two "meeting-houses."

"Upon my word, my dear," said Sinclair to his wife, "I ought to be ashamed to say it, but I prefer Barker's *au naturel*."

One evening, just before the young people left the town, and as Mrs. Sinclair sat alone in her room, the frowsy waitress announced "a lady," and was requested to bid her enter. A woman came with timid mien into the room, sat down, as invited, and removed her veil. Of course the young bride had never known Sally Johnson, the whilom belle of Barker's, but her husband would have noticed at a glance how greatly she was changed from the girl who walked with Foster past the engineers' quarters. It would be hard

to find a more striking contrast than was presented by the two women as they sat facing each other: the one in the flush of health and beauty, calm, sweet, self-possessed; the other still retaining some of the shabby finery of old days, but pale and haggard, with black rings under her eyes, and a pathetic air of humiliation.

"Mrs. Sinclair," she hurriedly began, "you do not know me, nor the like of me. I've got no right to speak to you, but I couldn't help it. Oh! please believe me, I am not real downright bad. I'm Sally Johnson, daughter of a man whom they drove out of the town. My mother died when I was little, and I *never* had a show; and folks think because I live with my father, and he makes me know the crowd he travels with, that I must be in with them, and be of their sort. I never had a woman speak a kind word to me, and I've had so much trouble that I'm just drove wild, and like to kill myself; and then I was at the station when you came in, and I saw your sweet face and the kind look in your eyes, and it came in my heart that I'd speak to you if I died for it." She leaned eagerly forward, her hands nervously closing on the back of a chair. "I suppose your husband never told you of me; like enough he never knew me; but I'll never forget him as long as I live. When he was here before, there was a young man"—here a faint color came in the wan cheeks—"who was fond of me, and I thought the world of him, and my father was down on him,

and the men that father was in with wanted to kill him; and Mr. Sinclair saved his life. He's gone away, and I've waited and waited for him to come back—and perhaps I'll never see him again. But oh! dear lady, I'll never forget what your husband did. He's a good man, and he deserves the love of a dear good woman like you, and if I dared I'd pray for you both, night and day."

She stopped suddenly and sank back in her seat, pale as before, and as if frightened by her own emotion. Mrs. Sinclair had listened with sympathy and increasing interest.

"My poor girl," she said, speaking tenderly (she had a lovely, soft voice) and with slightly heightened color, "I am delighted that you came to see me, and that my husband was able to help you. Tell me, can we not do more for you? I do not for one moment believe you can be happy with your present surroundings. Can we not assist you to leave them?"

The girl rose, sadly shaking her head. "I thank you for your words," she said. "I don't suppose I'll ever see you again, but I'll say, God bless you!"

She caught Mrs. Sinclair's hand, pressed it to her lips, and was gone.

Sinclair found his wife very thoughtful when he came home, and he listened with much interest to her story.

"Poor girl!" said he; "Foster is the man to

help her. I wonder where he is? I must inquire about him."

The next day they proceeded on their way to San Francisco, and matters drifted on at Barker's much as before. Johnson had, after an absence of some months, come back and lived without molestation amid the shifting population. Now and then, too, some of the older residents fancied they recognized, under slouched sombreros, the faces of some of his former "crowd" about the "Ranchman's Home," as his gaudy saloon was called.

Late on the very evening on which this story opens, and they had been "making up" the Denver Express in the train-house on the Missouri, "Jim" Watkins, agent and telegrapher at Barker's, was sitting in his little office, communicating with the station rooms by the ticket window. Jim was a cool, silent, efficient man, and not much given to talk about such episodes in his past life as the "wiping out" by Indians of the construction party to which he belonged, and his own rescue by the scouts. He was smoking an old and favorite pipe, and talking with one of "the boys" whose head appeared at the wicket. On a seat in the station sat a woman in a black dress and veil, apparently waiting for a train.

"Got a heap of letters and telegrams there, ain't yer, Jim?" remarked the man at the window.

"Yes," replied Jim; "they're for Engineer Sin-

clair, to be delivered to him when he passes through here. He left on No. 17, to-night." The inquirer did not notice the sharp start of the woman near him.

"Is that good-lookin' wife of his'n a-comin' with him?" asked he.

"Yes, there's letters for her, too."

"Well, good-night, Jim. See yer later," and he went out. The woman suddenly rose and ran to the window.

"Mr. Watkins," cried she, "can I see you for a few moments where no one can interrupt us? It's a matter of life and death." She clutched the sill with her thin hands, and her voice trembled. Watkins recognized Sally Johnson in a moment. He unbolted a door, motioned her to enter, closed and again bolted it, and also closed the ticket window. Then he pointed to a chair, and the girl sat down and leaned eagerly forward.

"If they knew I was here," she said in a hoarse whisper, "my life wouldn't be safe five minutes. I was waiting to tell you a terrible story, and then I heard who was on the train due here to-morrow night. Mr. Watkins, don't, for God's sake, ask me how I found out, but I hope to die if I ain't telling you the living truth! They're going to wreck that train—No. 17—at Dead Man's Crossing, fifteen miles east, and rob the passengers and the express car. It's the worst gang in the country, *Perry's*. They're going to

throw the train off the track, the passengers will be maimed and killed—and Mr. Sinclair and his wife on the cars! Oh! my God! Mr. Watkins, send them warning!"

She stood upright, her face deadly pale, her hands clasped. Watkins walked deliberately to the railroad map which hung on the wall and scanned it. Then he resumed his seat, laid his pipe down, fixed his eyes on the girl's face, and began to question her. At the same time his right hand, with which he had held the pipe, found its way to the telegraph key. None but an expert could have distinguished any change in the *clicking* of the instrument, which had been almost incessant; but Watkins had "called" the head office on the Missouri. In two minutes the "sounder" rattled out *"All right! What is it?"*

Watkins went on with his questions, his eyes still fixed on the poor girl's face, and all the time his fingers, as it were, playing with the key. If he were imperturbable, so was *not* a man sitting at a receiving instrument nearly five hundred miles away. He had "taken" but a few words when he jumped from his chair and cried:

"Shut that door, and call the superintendent and be quick! Charley, brace up—lively—and come and write this out!" With his wonderful electric pen, the handle several hundreds of miles long, Watkins, unknown to his interlocutor, was printing in the Morse alphabet this startling message:

"Inform'n rec'd. Perry gang going to throw No. 17 off track near —xth mile-post, this division, about nine to-morrow (Thursday) night, kill passengers, and rob express and mail. Am alone here. No chance to verify story, but believe it to be on square. Better make arrangements from your end to block game. No Sheriff here now. Answer."

The superintendent, responding to the hasty summons, heard the message before the clerk had time to write it out. His lips were closely compressed as he put his own hand on the key and sent these laconic sentences: *"O. K. Keep perfectly dark. Will manage from this end."*

Watkins, at Barker's, rose from his seat, opened the door a little way, saw that the station was empty, and then said to the girl, brusquely, but kindly:

"Sally, you've done the square thing, and saved that train. I'll take care that you don't suffer and that you get well paid. Now come home with me, and my wife will look out for you."

"Oh! no," cried the girl, shrinking back, "I must run away. You're mighty kind, but I daren't go with you." Detecting a shade of doubt in his eye, she added: "Don't be afeared; I'll die before they'll know I've given them away to you!" and she disappeared in the darkness.

At the other end of the wire, the superintendent had quietly impressed secrecy on his operator and clerk, ordered his fast mare harnessed, and gone to his private office.

"Read that!" said he to his secretary. "It was about time for some trouble of this kind, and now

I'm going to let Uncle Sam take care of his mails. If I don't get to the reservation before the General's turned in, I shall have to wake him up. Wait for me, please."

The gray mare made the six miles to the military reservation in just half an hour. The General was smoking his last cigar, and was alert in an instant; and before the superintendent had finished the jorum of "hot Scotch" hospitably tendered, the orders had gone by wire to the commanding officer at Fort ——, some distance east of Barker's, and been duly acknowledged.

Returning to the station, the superintendent remarked to the waiting secretary:

"The General's all right. Of course we can't tell that this is not a sell; but if those Perry hounds mean business they'll get all the fight they want—and if they've got any souls—which I doubt—may the Lord have mercy on them!"

He prepared several despatches, two of which were as follows:

"Mr. Henry Sinclair:

"On No. 17, Pawnee Junction:

This telegram your authority to take charge of train on which you are, and demand obedience of all officials and trainmen on road. Please do so, and act in accordance with information wired station agent at Pawnee Junction."

To the Station Agent:

"Reported Perry gang will try wreck and rob No. 17 near —xth mile-post, Denver Division, about nine Thursday night. Troops will await train at Fort ——. Car ordered ready for them. Keep everything secret, and act in accordance with orders of Mr. Sinclair."

"It's worth about ten thousand dollars," sententiously remarked he, "that Sinclair's on that train. He's got both sand and brains. Goodnight," and he went to bed and slept the sleep of the just.

III

The sun never shone more brightly and the air was never more clear and bracing than when Sinclair helped his wife off the train at Pawnee Junction. The station-master's face fell as he saw the lady, but he saluted the engineer with as easy an air as he could assume, and watched for an opportunity to speak to him alone. Sinclair read the despatches with an unmoved countenance, and after a few minutes' reflection simply said: "All right. Be sure to keep the matter perfectly quiet." At breakfast he was *distrait*—so much so that his wife asked him what was the matter. Taking her aside, he at once showed her the telegrams.

"You see my duty," he said. "My only thought is about you, my dear child. Will you stay here?"

She simply replied, looking into his face without a tremor:

"My place is with you." Then the conductor called "All aboard," and the train once more started.

Sinclair asked Foster to join him in the smoking compartment and tell him the promised story,

which the latter did. His rescue at Barker's, he frankly and gratefully said, *had* been the turning point in his life. In brief, he had "sworn off" from gambling and drinking, had found honest employment, and was doing well.

"I've two things to do now, Major," he added; "first, I must show my gratitude to you; and next"—he hesitated a little—"I want to find that poor girl that I left behind at Barker's. She was engaged to marry me, and when I came to think of it, and what a life I'd have made her lead, I hadn't the heart till now to look for her; but, seeing I'm on the right track, I'm going to find her, and get her to come with me. Her father's an —old scoundrel, but that ain't her fault, and I ain't going to marry *him*."

"Foster," quietly asked Sinclair, "do you know the Perry gang?"

The man's brow darkened.

"Know them?" said he. "I know them much too well. Perry is as ungodly a cutthroat as ever killed an emigrant in cold blood, and he's got in his gang nearly all those hounds that tried to hang me. Why do you ask, Major?"

Sinclair handed him the despatches. "You are the only man on the train to whom I have shown them," said he.

Foster read them slowly, his eyes lighting up as he did so. "Looks as if it was true," said he. "Let me see! Fort ——. Yes, that's the —th infantry. Two of their boys were killed at Sid-

ney last summer by some of the same gang, and the regiment's sworn vengeance. Major, if this story's on the square, that crowd's goose is cooked, and *don't you forget it!* I say, you must give me a hand in."

"Foster," said Sinclair, "I am going to put responsibility on your shoulders. I have no doubt that, if we be attacked, the soldiers will dispose of the gang; but I must take all possible precautions for the safety of the passengers. We must not alarm them. They can be made to think that the troops are going on a scout, and only a certain number of resolute men need be told of what we expect. Can you, late this afternoon, go through the cars, and pick them out? I will then put you in charge of the passenger cars, and you can post your men on the platforms to act in case of need. My place will be ahead."

"Major, you can depend on me," was Foster's reply. "I'll go through the train and have my eye on some boys of the right sort, and that's got their shooting-irons with them."

Through the hours of that day on rolled the train, still over the crisp buffalo grass, across the well-worn buffalo trails, past the prairie-dog villages. The passengers chatted, dozed, played cards, read, all unconscious, with the exception of three, of the coming conflict between the good and the evil forces bearing on their fate; of the fell preparations making for their disaster; of the grim preparations making to avert such disaster;

of all of which the little wires alongside of them had been talking back and forth. Watkins had telegraphed that he still saw no reason to doubt the good faith of his warning, and Sinclair had reported his receipt of authority and his acceptance thereof. Meanwhile, also, there had been set in motion a measure of that power to which appeal is so reluctantly made in time of peace. At Fort ——, a lonely post on the plains, the orders had that morning been issued for twenty men under Lieutenant Halsey to parade at 4 P. M., with overcoats, two days' rations, and ball cartridges; also for Assistant Surgeon Kesler to report for duty with the party. Orders as to destination were communicated direct to the lieutenant from the post commander, and on the minute the little column moved, taking the road to the station. The regiment from which it came had been in active service among the Indians on the frontier for a long time, and the officers and men were tried and seasoned fighters. Lieutenant Halsey had been well known at the West Point balls as the "leader of the german." From the last of these balls he had gone straight to the field, and three years had given him an enviable reputation for *sang-froid* and determined bravery. He looked every inch the soldier as he walked along the trail, his cloak thrown back and his sword tucked under his arm. The doctor, who carried a Modoc bullet in some inaccessible part of his scarred body, growled good-naturedly

at the need of walking, and the men, enveloped in their army-blue overcoats, marched easily by fours. Reaching the station, the lieutenant called the agent aside, and with him inspected, on a siding, a long platform car on which benches had been placed and secured. Then he took his seat in the station and quietly waited, occasionally twisting his long blond mustache. The doctor took a cigar with the agent, and the men walked about or sat on the edge of the platform. One of them, who obtained a surreptitious glance at his silent commander, told his companions that there was trouble ahead for somebody.

"That's just the way the leftenant looked, boys," said he, "when we was laying for them Apaches that raided Jones's Ranch and killed the women and little children."

In a short time the officer looked at his watch, formed his men, and directed them to take their places on the seats of the car. They had hardly done so when the whistle of the approaching train was heard. When it came up, the conductor, who had his instructions from Sinclair, had the engine detached and backed on the siding for the soldiers' car, which thus came between it and the foremost baggage car when the train was again made up. As arranged, it was announced that the troops were to be taken a certain distance to join a scouting party, and the curiosity of the passengers was but slightly excited. The soldiers sat quietly in their seats, their repeating

rifles held between their knees, and the officer in front. Sinclair joined the latter, and had a few words with him as the train moved on. A little later, when the stars were shining brightly overhead, they passed into the express car, and sent for the conductor and other trainmen, and for Foster. In a few words Sinclair explained the position of affairs. His statement was received with perfect coolness, and the men only asked what they were to do.

"I hope, boys," said Sinclair, "that we are going to put this gang to-night where they will make no more trouble. Lieutenant Halsey will bear the brunt of the fight, and it only remains for you to stand by the interests committed to your care. Mr. Express Agent, what help do you want?" The person addressed, a good-natured giant, girded with a cartridge belt, smiled as he replied:

"Well, sir, I'm wearing a watch which the company gave me for standing off the James gang in Missouri for half an hour, when we hadn't the ghost of a soldier about. I'll take the contract, and welcome, to hold *this* fort alone."

"Very well," said Sinclair. "Foster, what progress have you made?"

"Major, I've got ten or fifteen as good men as ever drew a bead, and just red-hot for a fight."

"That will do very well. Conductor, give the trainmen the rifles from the baggage car and let

them act under Mr. Foster. Now, boys, I am sure you will do your duty. That is all."

From the next station Sinclair telegraphed "All ready" to the superintendent, who was pacing his office in much suspense. Then he said a few words to his brave but anxious wife, and walked to the rear platform. On it were several armed men, who bade him good-evening, and asked "when the fun was going to begin." Walking through the train, he found each platform similarly occupied, and Foster going from one to the other. The latter whispered as he passed him:

"Major, I found Arizona Joe, the scout, in the smokin' car, and he's on the front platform. That lets me out, and although I know as well as you that there ain't any danger about that rear sleeper where the madam is, I ain't a-going to be far off from her." Sinclair shook him by the hand; then he looked at his watch. It was half-past eight. He passed through the baggage and express cars, finding in the latter the agent sitting behind his safe, on which lay two large revolvers. On the platform car he found the soldiers and their commander sitting silent and unconcerned as before. When Sinclair reached the latter and nodded, he rose and faced the men, and his fine voice was clearly heard above the rattle of the train.

"Company, 'ten*tion!*" The soldiers straightened themselves in a second.

"With ball cartridge, *load!*" It was done with the precision of a machine. Then the lieutenant spoke, in the same clear, crisp, tones that the troops had heard in more than one fierce battle.

"Men," said he, "in a few minutes the Perry gang, which you will remember, are going to try to run this train off the track, wound and kill the passengers, and rob the cars and the United States mail. It is our business to prevent them. Sergeant Wilson" (a gray-bearded non-commissioned officer stood up and saluted), "I am going on the engine. See that my orders are repeated. Now, men, aim low, and don't waste any shots." He and Sinclair climbed over the tender and spoke to the engine-driver.

"How are the air-brakes working?" asked Sinclair.

"First-rate."

"Then, if you slowed down now, you could stop the train in a third of her length, couldn't you?"

"Easy, if you don't mind being shaken up a bit."

"That is good. How is the country about the —xth mile-post?"

"Dead level, and smooth."

"Good again. Now, Lieutenant Halsey, this is a splendid head-light, and we can see a long way with my night glass. I will have a—"

"—2d mile-pole just past," interrupted the engine-driver.

"Only one more to pass, then, before we ought to strike them. Now, lieutenant, I undertake to stop the train within a very short distance of the gang. They will be on both sides of the track, no doubt; and the ground, as you hear, is quite level. You will best know what to do."

The officer stepped back. "Sergeant," called he, "do you hear me plainly?"

"Yes, sir."

"Have the men fix bayonets. When the train stops, and I wave my sword, let half jump off each side, run up quickly, and form line *abreast of the engine*—not ahead."

"Jack," said Sinclair to the engine-driver, "is your hand steady?" The man held it up with a smile. "Good. Now stand by your throttle and your air-brake. Lieutenant, better warn the men to hold on tight, and tell the sergeant to pass the word to the boys on the platforms, or they will be knocked off by the sudden stop. Now for a look ahead!" and he brought the binocular to his eyes.

The great parabolic head-light illuminated the track a long way in advance, all behind it being of course in darkness. Suddenly Sinclair cried out:

"The fools have a light there, as I am a living man; and there is a little red one near us. What can that be? All ready, Jack! By heaven! they have taken up two rails. Now *hold on, all!* STOP HER!!"

The engine-driver shut his throttle-valve with a jerk. Then, holding hard by it, he sharply turned a brass handle. There was a fearful jolt —a grating—and the train's way was checked. The lieutenant, standing sidewise, had drawn his sword. He waved it, and almost before he could get off the engine the soldiers were up and forming, still in shadow, while the bright light was thrown on a body of men ahead.

"Surrender, or you are dead men!" roared the officer. Curses and several shots were the reply. Then came the orders, quick and sharp:

"Forward! Close up! Double-quick! Halt! FIRE!" . . . It was speedily over. Left on the car with the men, the old sergeant had said:

"Boys, you hear. It's that —— Perry gang. Now, don't forget Larry and Charley that they murdered last year," and there had come from the soldiers a sort of fierce, subdued *growl.* The volley was followed by a bayonet charge, and it required all the officer's authority to save the lives even of those who "threw up their hands." Large as the gang was (outnumbering the troops), well armed and desperate as they were, every one was dead, wounded, or a prisoner when the men who guarded the train platforms ran up. The surgeon, with professional coolness, walked up to the robbers, his instrument case under his arm.

"Not much for me to do here, Lieutenant," said he. "That practice for Creedmoor is telling on the shooting. Good thing for the gang, too.

Bullets are better than rope, and a Colorado jury will give them plenty of that."

Sinclair had sent a man to tell his wife that all was over. Then he ordered a fire lighted, and the rails relaid. The flames lit a strange scene as the passengers flocked up. The lieutenant posted men to keep them back.

"Is there a telegraph station not far ahead, Sinclair?" asked he. "Yes? All right." He drew a small pad from his pocket, and wrote a despatch to the post commander.

"Be good enough to send that for me," said he, "and leave orders at Barker's for the night express eastward to stop for us, and bring a posse to take care of the wounded and prisoners. And now, my dear Sinclair, I suggest that you get the passengers into the cars, and go on as soon as those rails are spiked. When they realize the situation, some of them will feel precious ugly, and you know we can't have any lynching."

Sinclair glanced at the rails and gave the word at once to the conductor and brakemen, who began vociferating, "All aboard!" Just then Foster appeared, an expression of intense satisfaction showing clearly on his face, in the firelight.

"Major," said he, "I didn't use to take much stock in special Providence, or things being ordered; but I'm darned if I don't believe in them from this day. I was bound to stay where you put me, but I was uneasy, and wild to be in the scrimmage; and, if I had been there, I wouldn't

have taken notice of a little red light that wasn't much behind the rear platform when we stopped. When I saw there was no danger there I ran back, and what do you think I found? There was a woman in a dead faint, and just clutching a lantern that she had tied up in a red scarf, poor little thing! And, Major, it was Sally! It was the little girl that loved me out at Barker's, and has loved me and waited for me ever since! And when she came to, and knew me, she was so glad she 'most fainted away again; and she let on as it was her that gave away the job. And I took her into the sleeper, and the madam, God bless her!—she knew Sally before and was good to her—she took care of her and is cheering her up. And now, Major, I'm going to take her straight to Denver, and send for a parson and get her married to me, and she'll brace up, sure pop."

The whistle sounded, and the train started. From the window of the "sleeper" Sinclair and his wife took their last look at the weird scene. The lieutenant, standing at the side of the track, wrapped in his cloak, caught a glimpse of Mrs. Sinclair's pretty face, and returned her bow. Then, as the car passed out of sight, he tugged at his mustache and hummed:

"Why, boys, why,
Should we be melancholy, boys,
Whose business 'tis to die?"

In less than an hour, telegrams having in the meantime been sent in both directions, the train

ran alongside the platform at Barker's; and Watkins, imperturbable as usual, met Sinclair, and gave him his letters.

"Perry gang wiped out, I hear, Major," said he. "Good thing for the country. That's a lesson the 'toughs' in these parts won't forget for a long time. Plucky girl that give 'em away, wasn't she? Hope she's all right."

"She is all right," said Sinclair with a smile.

"Glad of that. By the way, that father of her'n passed in his checks to-night. He'd got one warning from the Vigilantes, and yesterday they found out he was in with this gang, and they was a-going for him; but when the telegram come, he put a pistol to his head and saved them all trouble. Good riddance to everybody, I say. The sheriff's here now, and is going east on the next train to get them fellows. He's got a big posse together, and I wouldn't wonder if they was hard to hold in, after the 'boys in blue' is gone."

In a few minutes the train was off, and its living freight—the just and the unjust, the reformed and the rescued, the happy and the anxious. With many of the passengers the episode of the night was already a thing of the past. Sinclair sat by the side of his wife, to whose cheeks the color had all come back; and Sally Johnson lay in her berth, faint still, but able to give an occasional smile to Foster. In the station on the Missouri the reporters were gathered about the happy superintendent, smoking his cigars, and

filling their note-books with items. In Denver, their brethren would gladly have done the same, but Watkins failed to gratify them. He was a man of few words. When the train had gone, and a friend remarked: "Hope they'll get through all right, now," he simply said: "Yes, likely. Two shots don't most always go in the same hole." Then he went to the telegraph instrument. In a few minutes he could have told a story as wild as a Norse *saga,* but what he said, when Denver had responded, was only—

"No. 17, *fifty-five minutes late."*

FRICTIONAL ELECTRICITY

BY MAX ADELER

FRICTIONAL ELECTRICITY

BY MAX ADELER

I HAPPENED to visit the accident ward of St. Paracelsus' Hospital because a friend of mine who is interested in the Flower Mission asked me to stop there during my afternoon walk and give a few flowers to the sufferers.

When I had arranged the last half-dozen of the roses in a vase upon the little stand by the bedside of one bruised and battered patient, he looked at me gratefully, and said:

"Oh, thank you, sir! And would you mind, sir, stopping for a bit of talk? I'm so lonely and miserable."

I sat upon the chair by the bed and with my hand smoothed the counterpane, while the patient asked me:

"Do I really look like a burglar, sir, do you think?"

I hesitated to reply as I examined his face. It was really covered with bandages, but his nose seemed swollen and there were bruises about both eyes.

"I don't wonder you don't like to speak your mind when you see me here a broken wreck,

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smashed all up and not looking a bit like myself, sir. But if you would see me well and strong and all fixed up for going to church you'd say right off that I don't favor no burglar in looks."

I asked the unfortunate man his name.

"Mordecai Barnes, sir, and I'm a journeyman plumber, sir, with a good character, and don't take no second place in that business with no man. How did I get here? What banged me all up into a shame and a disgrace like this? Well, I'll tell you, sir, if you have the patience to listen, for it does me good to talk who has been used so hard, and can get no attention from the nurses or nobody in this here asylum. Do you understand about frictional electricity, sir? No? I thought not; and well had it been for me, for this shattered hulk that you see a-lying here, if I had never heard of it neither! I'll tell you how it was, sir. My mate, George Watkins, and there ain't no better man nowheres if you go clear round the globe—George Watkins is one of these men with inquiring minds, always a-hungering for knowledge, and so George off he goes week after week to the lectures up at the Huxley Institute. You know it; in that yallow building over by Nonpareil Square. And George often he told me about the wonderful things he learned there, and among others he was fond of explaining to me about frictional electricity.

"It seems, sir, for you may not know it any more'n I knowed it until George explained it to me, that there's three different kinds of electricity. There's the kind you make with a steam engine, and the kind you make with acid, and the kind you make with friction. Well, sir, would you believe—or, let me say first, have you ever rubbed a black cat on the back in a dark room and seen the sparks fly? Of course, and, sir, I know it's almost beyond belief, but, positive, they told George Watkins, my mate, up at the Huxley Institute, that them sparks and the aurora borealis that you see sometimes a-lighting up the heavens is one and the same thing! Wonderful, isn't it, sir, that Science should discover that a black cat is some kind of kin to the aurora borealis? But George says that's what they said, for the aurora borealis is caused by the earth a-rolling around and rubbing the air just as the sparks is caused by stroking the cat's back.

"And George he says that this here frictional electricity is the only kind that'll cure pain. The steam-engine kind won't do it, and the acid kind won't do it, but the frictional kind'll do it every time if you only know how to apply it.

"Well, sir, now I pass to the sorrerful part of my story. There is a girl named Bella Dougherty that does housework for a man named Muffitt, and a mighty nice girl she is; or, I used to think her nice. Maybe you know where Mr. Muffitt lives, on 149th Street, just above Parvin

Street, the third house on the left with white shutters.

"Anyhow, I got to be fond of Bella and often used to set and talk with her in the evenings in Mr. Muffitt's kitchen, and maybe have two or three other girls come in sometimes, with a few men; though I never cared, sir, for much flocking together at such times, for Bella Dougherty she was good enough company for me, just her and I by ourselves.

"Howsomdever, there was another man that had a kind of fancy for Bella Dougherty, although in my opinion he isn't fit to wipe her feet on, and his name is William Jones.

"This yer William Jones used to come intruding around there in Mr. Muffitt's kitchen when he wasn't wanted and when he seen that me and Bella would rather be a-setting there by ourselves. And so, sir, one night, just to kill the time till he'd quit and go, I begun to tell them what George Watkins said to me about the Huxley Institute and frictional electricity being a sure cure for pain.

"And William Jones, a-winking at Bella Dougherty, as much as to say, sir, that he'd be having the laugh on me, said he had a pain that minute in his head from neuralgia and he'd bet me a quarter no frictional electricity would drive it out. I know now what was the matter with the head of William Jones. Not neuralgia, nor nothing of the sort, sir. It was vacuum. My

mate, George Watkins, tells me that at the Institute they say that vacuum always produces pain, and that was the only thing the matter with this William Jones I'm a-telling you about.

"I never take no dare, not from no man of that kind, anyways, sir, so I bet him a quarter I'd cure him, and cure him with frictional electricity, too. So he set down on the chair a-laughing and a-winking at Bella Dougherty, who set over by the range holding the quarters; and I begun to rub William Jones's eye-brows with my two thumbs; just gently, but right along just like stroking a cat; keeping it up, a-rubbing and a-rubbing, until at last I asked him how he felt now; and, you can imagine my supprise, sir, when I seen that William Jones was fast asleep! I was skeered at first; but in a minute I seen that I had hypnertized him unbeknown to myself, and there set William Jones 's if he was froze stiff.

"I wa'n't so very sorry, sir, when I found out how things was a-going, although if I could have seen what was the consequences of this strange occurrence I'd 'a' seized my hat and bid Bella Dougherty good-by and started straight for home.

"But, sir, of course I acted like a fool, for I'd read in the papers how a man who hypnertizes another man can make him believe anything and do anything, and so I thought I'd have some fun with William Jones and enjoy a lovely, quiet evening with Bella Dougherty.

"So I says to William Jones:

" 'Now, William, you're a little school-scholar oncet again and you've missed your lesson, and so you just go over there in that corner by the china closet and stand with your face to the wall and say over and over your multiplication table till you know it right.'

"And so, to the supprise of Bella Dougherty, William Jones went right over in the corner, like I told him, and there he stood, saying: 'Six sixes is thirty-six, six sevens is forty-two,' and so on, whilst I set over with Bella Dougherty peacefully enjoying ourselves just exactly 's if William Jones wasn't anywheres about.

"And so, sir, it went on until Mrs. Muffitt she come down and said to Bella Dougherty it was time to shut the house up, and then I bid her good-night and told William to go home and go straight to bed, which he did, and a-saying the multiplication table all the way down the street. He would have said it all night, sir, I do believe, if I hadn't ordered him to stop and to begin saying his prayers when I passed him in at his front door.

"You may believe me, sir, that I had William Jones on my mind all night and was a-worrying a little about him too, for fear maybe he'd never come to. So around I goes the first thing in the morning to his boarding-house, and his landlady tells me he had been a-saying his prayers all mixed up like with the multiplication table ever

since he come home the night before. She was a bit troubled about it, sir, as you may imagine, for William Jones was a good boarder and it 'd 'a' been money out of her pocket if he had lost his mind.

"So, then, I seen William Jones and knowed at oncet that the hypnertizing still had hold of him. Very well; I had no idea how to get him out of it and it didn't hurt him nohow, so I just commanded William Jones to drop the multiplication table and his prayers and to fix all his intellect in the regular way on plumbing; and William Jones at oncet calmed down and seemed his old self again.

"Then a wicked thought flashed into my mind. You know how it is yourself, sir; you are tempted and you are weak and you fall, and then the first thing you know, to be sure your sin'll find you out and there you are! Here I am, a shattered hulk. It suddenly occurred to me, sir, that if I could control William Jones, why not turn his affections away from Bella Dougherty, who might take a fancy to him? who knows? women are so queer! and direct his thoughts toward my own Aunt Maggie, who is a middle-aged widder and not so bad-looking, and far too good for such a man as William Jones, although to speak the plain truth I had no objections to having him for an uncle by marriage.

"Therefore I did so, sir, and before the week was out I heard that William Jones was plumb-

ing in the most supprising manner, plumbing here and plumbing there, and paying attentions vigorously, so to speak, to Aunt Maggie every evening.

"In the meantime, sir, believe me, I did not lose time in my suit with Bella Dougherty, who seemed real mad at William Jones when people began to talk about his courting Aunt Maggie, so that in less than two weeks, when Bella Dougherty heard that William Jones and Aunt Maggie had agreed to marry, I got Bella Dougherty about as good as to say, although she never quite said it square, that she would have me.

"I never knowed how it happened, sir, whether somebody waked William Jones up or he just come to by himself, but, sir, anyhow, William Jones about that time dropped hypnertism and was himself again. Imagine, sir, how things stood! There never was a man as mad as William Jones; mad with me, and mad with Aunt Maggie, to whom he sent a cruel message that he wa'n't marrying no grandmas, and that made Aunt Maggie mad; and then William Jones sat down and wrote me a letter to the general effect that whenever he met me my course in this life would be short.

"Naturally, sir, as you may believe, I kept out of William Jones's way, for I am not fond of quarreling, and besides, William Jones is forty pounds heavier, sir, than I am.

"But one night while I was setting in the kitchen at Muffitt's, having some uplifting conversation with Bella Dougherty, there was a sudden knock on the side door, and up she jumps, pale and skeered, and says: "I do believe that is William Jones. He said he might call, maybe, this evening!' So, of course, as I never hunt trouble, I raised the window sash over by the kitchen table at the back and went out just as William Jones come in the side door. He kept the door open a-watching for me, and so as I couldn't get to the gate I climbed over the high fence into the next yard.

"I ought to have gone right home, sir, without stopping, but I hated to leave William Jones there with Bella Dougherty, and me just driven out; so, as it was raining hard and I had on my Sunday suit, what does I do but try the latch on the kitchen door of the house next to Mr. Muffitt's, and finding the door opened, in I walked and set down in a chair to await what was going to happen. That was a bad job for me, sir! It isn't safe to take one false step.

"For the next minute the inside door from the dining-room springs open and a man jumps out and grabs me and says: 'I've got thee at last, have I!' He was a Quaker, sir; a big man and with a grip like iron. I never knowed a man with a grip like that. Did you ever, sir, have your fingers in the crack of a door and somebody a-leaning hard on the door? That was the way

this Quaker held me. Then he calls out 'Amelia! Amelia!' and in a minute a sweet old Quaker lady comes out with a candle, and he says to her: 'I've caught that burglar, Amelia; thee get the clothes line.' "

"So the lady she gets the clothes line and that man he ties my hands and my arms behind my back, good and tight, and then he made me set down and he ties me to the chair, and at last he gives the rope two or three turns around the leg of the kitchen table and says to me: 'Friend, thee can just set there while I go to get an officer!' Gave me no chance to explain. Took it all for granted; whereas if he would have listened to me I could have cleared up the whole mystery in two minutes.

"So then, sir, out he goes for a policeman, and the old lady sets down in a chair not far from me and said she was sorry I was so wicked and asked me about my mother, and if I ever went to First-Day school, and a whole lot of things. Then a thought seemed to strike her and she went into the next room and came back with a book in her hand, and she said she would read a good book to me while we waited for justice to take its course.

"She was lovely to look at, sir, with her tidy brown frock and the crape handkerchief folded acrost her bosom and her cap and the smile on her face; a sweet face, sir; an angel face; yes, sir, but sweet faces often has cruel dispositions be-

hind them. For then she told me that the book was called Barclay's Apology for the People called Quakers, or something like that, and she begun to read it to me.

"Have you ever read that book, sir? It is dedicated, I think, to Charles the Second, and it begins with Fifteen Propositions, and she read every one of them Propositions from first to last. Then she turned to the section, sir, about Salutations and Recreations, and she read and read and read until, sir, actually it made my head swim.

"Do you know, sir, is Barclay still alive—the man who wrote that book? Is there no way of getting even with him?

"I couldn't get away. I might have walked out somehow with the chair fastened to me; but I couldn't go, could I, sir, with the table tied to my leg, and particularly if I had to climb the fence? So I had to set there and be regarded as a burglar.

"But at last I *would* be heard, and I told her I was no burglar but an innercent man; and then she looked in the index to find if Barclay had anything interesting to say about the wickedness of telling falsehoods. And then I said I was a member of the Baptist Society, and she said at once she would read Barclay on the errors of that sect; but I insisted on being heard, and I explained to her that I got into this trouble by trying to cure William Jones by frictional elec-

tricity, and she said: 'Thee has an ingenious and fruitful mind to invent such a story. Oh, that it had been turned to better devices than following a life of evil!'

" 'And it seems hard, too,' I said, 'that a perfectly respectable Baptist plumber should be arrested as a burglar simply because he tried to relieve the pain of William Jones by a scientific method invented by the Huxley Institute.'

" Where is thy friend William Jones?' she asked.

"Do you know, sir, at that very moment you could hear through the partition William Jones and Bella Dougherty laughing next door! It seemed like mockery to me, a-setting there in chains, so to speak.

" 'He is next door, ma'am,' I said, 'a-courting the hired girl.'

" 'I will prove if thee is telling the truth,' she said, and she got up and moved toward the door.

" 'No, ma'am, no!' I said; 'please don't do that! William mustn't know that I am here'; and so she comes back and sets down again, and picks up Barclay, and looks sorrerful at me, and says:

" 'It is wicked for thee to have such vain imaginations. Why does thee persist in pretending that there is a William Jones?' And then she started to look through Barclay to find if he had anything that would fit the William Jones part of the case.

"What could I do? I daresn't call in William Jones to prove my innercence; he was mad all over at me and a bigger man, too, and here I was tied; and I couldn't call Bella Dougherty without William Jones knowing it. It was hard, sir, for a man as innercent as a little babe to set there with that sweet and smooth old lady considering him a shameless story-teller and firing Barclay at him, now wasn't it, sir? Would you have called William Jones, sir, under them there circumstances, and his laughter and Bella Dougherty's still a-resounding through the partition?

"Well, sir, that policeman was a long time a-coming with the old Quaker. I never knowed why; but Friend Amelia she set down again and turned over the leaves of Barclay and begun oncet more to read about Salutations and Recreations while, strange as it may seem to you, sir, I felt that I'd rather see the policeman and be locked up in a dungeon than to hear more of it.

"But, howsomdever, after a while in comes the Quaker and the officer with him, and the very first minute the officer seen me he says:

" 'I reckernize him as an old offender.'

" 'No you don't!' says I; 'I'm no old offender nor a young offender. I'm a perfeckly honest Baptist plumber, and I kin prove it, too.'

" 'How kin you prove it?' says the officer.

" 'By William Jones,' says I, 'who is a-setting

in that kitchen right next door, a-wooing the hired girl.'

"I was bold about it, sir, because I knowed William Jones daresn't strike at me while the officer was there.

" 'We'll see about that,' says the officer, and in he goes to Mr. Muffitt's yard next door and comes back with William Jones. I have no use for a man like William Jones. What do you think he does, sir? Why, he looks me over, from head to foot, in a blank sort of a way, and then, turning to the policeman, he says: 'I don't know the man, officer; never seen him before'; then that low-down plumber walks out and leaves me there and goes back, and in a minute I hear him and Bella Dougherty a-laughing worse than ever.

" 'I thought not,' says the officer, slipping the handcuffs on me, 'and so now you come right along.' And Friend Amelia looked mournful at me and says to me she would come around regular and read Barclay to me in my cell after I was convicted.

"And so, sir, to make a long story short, I was took up before the magistrate and held for burglary, and my mate, George Watkins, went my bail and so I was let go.

"I might stop here, sir, but I must tell you that the following Thursday I met William Jones up a kind of a blind alley where I was working, while he was working in a house on the opposite

side. He had me in a corner where there was no chance to run, so I put on a bold face and went right up to him and says:

" 'William, there's been some differences betwixt us, but I'm not the man to bear grudges and I forgive you."

" 'What's that?' says he, savage.

" 'Why,' says I, 'the whole thing is just one of them unpleasant misunderstandings'; and then I started to explain to him about the Huxley Institute theory of frictional electricity and the aurora borealis.

"I can't tell what he said, sir, in reply, with reference to the aurora borealis, because I'm a decent man and never use no low language; but suddenly he jumped on me, and the first thing I knowed I was being lifted in the ambulance and fetched to this yer hospital. Was it right, sir, do you think, for William Jones to strike me foul, like that, while I was trying to state my case to him? No, sir. But that's not the worst of it. Last Tuesday word came to me that Bella Dougherty had throwed me over and is going to marry William Jones on Decoration Day! Think of that, sir!" and Mordecai Barnes turned his head upon his pillow and moaned.

Turning again toward me, he was about to resume his statement, when suddenly he exclaimed:

"Why, there's Aunt Maggie."

A woman of fifty years, nicely clad, came to the bedside and said to him coldly:

"Is that you, Mordecai Barnes?"

"Yes, Aunt Maggie."

"I'm ashamed of you, Mordecai Barnes," said she; "ashamed of you. It served you right. You got just what was comin' to you. I wish William had banged you worse."

Mordecai Barnes groaned.

"And more than that," continued Aunt Maggie, glaring at him through her spectacles, "I've torn up my old will which named you my sole heir and made a new one and left all my property to this yer very hospital."

With these words Aunt Maggie walked away and left the room.

Mordecai Barnes could not speak for a few minutes. He looked as if death would be welcome. Then, pulling the bedclothes up under his chin and closing his eyes wearily, he said:

"Curse the day, say I, when George Watkins first went to the Huxley Institute and heard about frictional electricity."

MY TERMINAL MORAINE

BY FRANK R. STOCKTON

MY TERMINAL MORAINE

BY FRANK R. STOCKTON

A MAN'S birth is generally considered the most important event of his existence, but I truly think that what I am about to relate was more important to me than my entrance into this world; because, had not these things happened, I am of the opinion that my life would have been of no value to me and my birth a misfortune.

My father, Joshua Cuthbert, died soon after I came to my majority, leaving me what he had considered a comfortable property. This consisted of a large house and some forty acres of land, nearly the whole of which lay upon a bluff, which upon three sides descended to a little valley, through which ran a gentle stream. I had no brothers or sisters. My mother died when I was a boy, and I, Walter Cuthbert, was left the sole representative of my immediate family.

My estate had been a comfortable one to my father, because his income from the practice of his profession as a physician enabled him to keep it up and provide satisfactorily for himself and me. I had no profession and but a very small income, the result of a few investments my father

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had made. Left to myself, I felt no inducement to take up any profession or business. My wants were simple, and for a few years I lived without experiencing any inconvenience from the economies which I was obliged to practice. My books, my dog, my gun and my rod made life pass very pleasantly to me, and the subject of an increase of income never disturbed my mind.

But as time passed on the paternal home began to present an air of neglect and even dilapidation, which occasionally attracted my attention and caused, as I incidentally discovered, a great deal of unfavorable comment among my neighbors, who thought that I should go to work and at least earn money enough to put the house and grounds in a condition which should not be unworthy the memory of the good Dr. Cuthbert. In fact, I began to be looked upon as a shiftless young man; and, now and then, I found a person old enough and bold enough to tell me so.

But, instead of endeavoring to find some suitable occupation by which I might better my condition and improve my estate, I fell in love, which, in the opinion of my neighbors, was the very worst thing that could have happened to me at this time. I lived in a thrifty region, and for a man who could not support himself to think of taking upon him the support of a wife, especially such a wife as Agnes Havelot would be, was considered more than folly and looked upon as a crime. Everybody knew that I was in love

with Miss Havelot, for I went to court her as boldly as I went to fish or shoot. There was a good deal of talk about it, and this finally came to the ears of Mr. Havelot, my lady's father, who, thereupon, promptly ordered her to have no more to do with me.

The Havelot estate, which adjoined mine, was a very large one, containing hundreds and hundreds of acres; and the Havelots were rich, rich enough to frighten any poor young man of marrying intent. But I did not appreciate the fact that I was a poor young man. I had never troubled my head about money as it regarded myself, and I now did not trouble my head about it as it regarded Agnes. I loved her, I hoped she loved me, and all other considerations were thrown aside. Mr. Havelot, however, was a man of a different way of thinking.

It was a little time before I became convinced that the decision of Agnes's father, that there should be no communication between that dear girl and myself, really meant anything. I had never been subjected to restrictions, and I did not understand how people of spirit could submit to them; but I was made to understand it when Mr. Havelot, finding me wandering about his grounds, very forcibly assured me that if I should make my appearance there again, or if he discovered any attempt on my part to communicate with his daughter in any way, he would send her from home. He concluded the very

brief interview by stating that if I had any real regard for his daughter's happiness I would cease attentions which would meet with the most decided disapprobation from her only surviving parent and which would result in exiling her from home. I begged for one more interview with Miss Havelot, and if it had been granted I should have assured her of the state of my affections, no matter if there were reasons to suppose that I would never see her again; but her father very sternly forbade anything of the kind, and I went away crushed.

It was a very hard case, for if I played the part of a bold lover and tried to see Agnes without regard to the wicked orders of her father, I should certainly be discovered; and then it would be not only myself, but the poor girl, who would suffer. So I determined that I would submit to the Havelot decree. No matter if I never saw her again, never heard the sound of her voice, it would be better to have her near me, to have her breathe the same air, cast up her eyes at the same sky, listen to the same birds, that I breathed, looked at and listened to, than to have her far away, probably in Kentucky, where I knew she had relatives, and where the grass was blue and the sky probably green, or at any rate would appear so to her if in the least degree she felt as I did in regard to the ties of home and the affinities between the sexes.

I now found myself in a most doleful and even

desperate condition of mind. There was nothing in the world which I could have for which I cared. Hunting, fishing, and the rambles through woods and fields that had once been so delightful to me now became tasks which I seldom undertook. The only occupation in which I felt the slightest interest was that of sitting in a tower of my house with a telescope, endeavoring to see my Agnes on some portion of her father's grounds; but, although I diligently directed my glass at the slightest stretch of lawn or bit of path which I could discern through openings in the foliage, I never caught sight of her. I knew, however, by means of daily questions addressed to my cook, whose daughter was a servant in the Havelot house, that Agnes was yet at home. For that reason I remained at home. Otherwise, I should have become a wanderer.

About a month after I had fallen into this most unhappy state an old friend came to see me. We had been school-fellows, but he differed from me in almost every respect. He was full of ambition and energy, and, although he was but a few years older than myself, he had already made a name in the world. He was a geologist, earnest and enthusiastic in his studies and his investigations. He told me frankly that the object of his visit was twofold. In the first place, he wanted to see me, and, secondly, he wanted to make some geological examinations on my

grounds, which were situated, as he informed me, upon a terminal moraine, a formation which he had not yet had an opportunity of practically investigating.

I had not known that I lived on a moraine, and now that I knew it, I did not care. But Tom Burton glowed with high spirits and lively zeal as he told me how the great bluff on which my house stood, together with the other hills and wooded terraces which stretched away from it along the side of the valley, had been formed by the minute fragments of rock and soil, which, during ages and ages, had been gradually pushed down from the mountains by a great glacier which once occupied the country to the northeast of my house. "Why, Walter, my boy," he cried, "if I had not read it all in the books I should have known for myself, as soon as I came here, that there had once been a glacier up there, and as it gradually moved to the southwest it had made this country what it is. Have you a stream down there in that dell which I see lies at right angles with the valley and opens into it?"

"No," said I; "I wish there were one. The only stream we have flows along the valley and not on my property."

Without waiting for me Tom ran down into my dell, pushed his way through the underbrush to its upper end, and before long came back flushed with heat and enthusiasm.

"Well, sir," he said, "that dell was once the

bed of a glacial stream, and you may as well clear it out and plant corn there if you want to, for there never will be another stream flowing through it until there is another glacier out in the country beyond. And now I want you to let me dig about here. I want to find out what sort of stuff the glacier brought down from the mountains. I will hire a man and will promise you to fill up all the holes I make."

I had no objection to my friend's digging as much as he pleased, and for three days he busied himself in getting samples of the soil of my estate. Sometimes I went out and looked at him, and gradually a little of his earnest ardor infused itself into me, and with some show of interest I looked into the holes he had made and glanced over the mineral specimens he showed me.

"Well, Walter," said he, when he took leave of me, "I am very sorry that I did not discover that the glacier had raked out the bed of a gold mine from the mountains up there and brought it down to you, or at any rate, some valuable iron ore. But I am obliged to say it did not do anything of the sort. But I can tell you one thing it brought you, and, although it is not of any great commercial value, I should think you could make good use of it here on your place. You have one of the finest deposits of gravel on this bluff that I have met with, and if you were to take out a lot of it and spread it over your

driveways and paths, it would make it a great deal pleasanter for you to go about here in bad weather and would wonderfully improve your property. Good roads always give an idea of thrift and prosperity." And then he went away with a valise nearly full of mineral specimens which he assured me were very interesting.

My interest in geological formations died away as soon as Tom Burton had departed, but what he said about making gravel roads giving the place an air of thrift and prosperity had its effect upon my mind. It struck me that it would be a very good thing if people in the neighborhood, especially the Havelots, were to perceive on my place some evidences of thrift and prosperity. Most palpable evidences of unthrift and inpecuniosity had cut me off from Agnes, and why might it not be that some signs of improved circumstances would remove, to a degree at least, the restrictions which had been placed between us? This was but a very little thing upon which to build hopes; but ever since men and women have loved they have built grand hopes upon very slight foundations. I determined to put my roadways in order.

My efforts in this direction were really evidence of anything but thriftiness, for I could not in the least afford to make my drives and walks resemble the smooth and beautiful roads which wound over the Havelot estate, although to do this was my intention, and I set about the

work without loss of time. I took up this occupation with so much earnestness that it seriously interfered with my observations from the tower.

I hired two men and set them to work to dig a gravel-pit. They made excavations at several places, and very soon found what they declared to be a very fine quality of road-gravel. I ordered them to dig on until they had taken out what they believed to be enough to cover all my roads. When this had been done, I would have it properly spread and rolled. As this promised to be a very good job, the men went to work in fine spirits and evidently made up their minds that the improvements I desired would require a vast deal of gravel.

When they had dug a hole so deep that it became difficult to throw up the gravel from the bottom, I suggested that they should dig at some other place. But to this they objected, declaring that the gravel was getting better and better, and it would be well to go on down as long as the quality continued to be so good. So, at last, they put a ladder into the pit, one man carrying the gravel up in a hod, while the other dug it; and when they had gone down so deep that this was no longer practicable, they rigged up a derrick and windlass and drew up the gravel in a bucket.

Had I been of a more practical turn of mind I might have perceived that this method of work-

ing made the job a very long and, consequently, to the laborers, a profitable one; but no such idea entered into my head, and not noticing whether they were bringing up sand or gravel I allowed them to proceed.

One morning I went out to the spot where the excavation was being made and found that the men had built a fire on the ground near the opening of the pit, and that one of them was bending over it warming himself. As the month was July this naturally surprised me, and I inquired the reason for so strange a performance.

"Upon my soul," said the man, who was rubbing his hands over the blaze, "I do not wonder you are surprised, but it's so cold down at the bottom of that pit that me fingers is almost frosted; and we haven't struck any wather neither, which couldn't be expected, of course, a-diggin' down into the hill like this."

I looked into the hole and found it was very deep. "I think it would be better to stop digging here," said I, "and try some other place."

"I wouldn't do that just now," said the other man, who was preparing to go down in the bucket; "to be sure, it's a good deal more like a well than a gravel-pit, but it's bigger at the top than at the bottom, and there's no danger of its cavin' in, and now that we've got everything rigged up all right, it would be a pity to make a change yet awhile."

So I let them go on; but the next day when I

went out again I found that they had come to the conclusion that it was time to give up digging in that hole. They both declared that it almost froze their feet to stand on the ground where they worked at the bottom of the excavation. The slow business of drawing up the gravel by means of a bucket and windlass was, therefore, reluctantly given up. The men now went to work to dig outward from this pit toward the edge of the bluff which overlooked my little dell, and gradually made a wide trench, which they deepened until—and I am afraid to say how long they worked before this was done—they could walk to the original pit from the level of the dell. They then deepened the inner end of the trench, wheeling out the gravel in barrows, until they had made an inclined pathway from the dell to the bottom of the pit. The wheeling now became difficult, and the men soon declared that they were sure that they had quite gravel enough.

When they made this announcement, and I had gone into some financial calculations, I found that I would be obliged to put an end to my operations, at least for the present, for my available funds were gone, or would be when I had paid what I owed for the work. The men were very much disappointed by the sudden ending of this good job, but they departed, and I was left to gaze upon a vast amount of gravel, of which, for the present at least, I could not afford to make the slightest use.

The mental despondency which had been somewhat lightened during my excavating operations now returned, and I became rather more gloomy and downcast than before. My cook declared that it was of no use to prepare meals which I never ate, and suggested that it would save money if I discharged her. As I had not paid her anything for a long time, I did not see how this would benefit me.

Wandering about one day with my hat pulled down over my eyes and my hands thrust deep into my pockets, I strolled into the dell and stood before the wide trench which led to the pit in which I had foolishly sunk the money which should have supported me for months. I entered this dismal passage and walked slowly and carefully down the incline until I reached the bottom of the original pit, where I had never been before. I stood here looking up and around me and wondering how men could bring themselves to dig down into such dreary depths simply for the sake of a few dollars a week, when I involuntarily began to stamp my feet. They were very cold, although I had not been there more than a minute. I wondered at this and took up some of the loose gravel in my hand. It was quite dry, but it chilled my fingers. I did not understand it, and I did not try to, but walked up the trench and around into the dell, thinking of Agnes.

I was very fond of milk, which, indeed, was

almost the only food I now cared for, and I was consequently much disappointed at my noonday meal when I found that the milk had soured and was not fit to drink.

"You see, sir," said Susan, "ice is very scarce and dear, and we can not afford to buy much of it. There was no freezin' weather last winter, and the price has gone up as high as the thermometer, sir, and so, between the two of 'em, I can't keep things from spoilin'."

The idea now came to me that if Susan would take the milk, and anything else she wished to keep cool in this hot weather, to the bottom of the gravel-pit, she would find the temperature there cold enough to preserve them without ice, and I told her so.

The next morning Susan came to me with a pleased countenance and said, "I put the butter and the milk in that pit last night, and the butter's just as hard and the milk's as sweet as if it had been kept in an ice-house. But the place is as cold as an ice-house, sir, and unless I am mistaken, there's ice in it. Anyway, what do you call that?" And she took from a little basket a piece of grayish ice as large as my fist. "When I found it was so cold down there, sir," she said, "I thought I would dig a little myself and see what made it so; and I took a fire-shovel and hatchet, and, when I had scraped away some of the gravel, I came to something hard and chopped off this piece of it, which is real ice, sir, or I know

nothing about it. Perhaps there used to be an ice-house there, and you might get some of it if you dug, though why anybody should put it down so deep and then cover it up, I'm sure I don't know. But as long as there's any there, I think we should get it out, even if there's only a little of it; for I can not take everything down to that pit, and we might as well have it in the refrigerator."

This seemed to me like very good sense, and if I had had a man I should have ordered him to go down to the pit and dig up any lumps of ice he might find and bring them to the house. But I had no man, and I therefore became impressed with the opinion that if I did not want to drink sour milk for the rest of the summer, it might be a good thing for me to go down there and dig out some of the ice myself. So with pickaxe and shovel I went to the bottom of the pit and set myself to work.

A few inches below the surface I found that my shovel struck something hard, and, clearing away the gravel from this for two or three square feet, I looked down upon a solid mass of ice. It was dirty and begrimed, but it was truly ice. With my pick I detached some large pieces of it. These, with some discomfort, I carried out into the dell where Susan might come with her basket and get them.

For several days Susan and I took out ice from the pit, and then I thought that perhaps

Tom Burton might feel some interest in this frozen deposit in my terminal moraine, and so I wrote to him about it. He did not answer my letter, but instead arrived himself the next afternoon.

"Ice at the bottom of a gravel-pit," said he, "is a thing I never heard of. Will you lend me a spade and a pickaxe?"

When Tom came out of that pit—it was too cold a place for me to go with him and watch his proceedings—I saw him come running toward the house.

"Walter," he shouted, "we must hire all the men we can find and dig, dig, dig. If I am not mistaken something has happened on your place that is wonderful almost beyond belief. But we must not stop to talk. We must dig, dig, dig; dig all day and dig all night. Don't think of the cost. I'll attend to that. I'll get the money. What we must do is to find men and set them to work."

"What's the matter?" said I. "What has happened?"

"I haven't time to talk about it now; besides I don't want to, for fear that I should find that I am mistaken. But get on your hat, my dear fellow, and let's go over to the town for men."

The next day there were eight men working under the direction of my friend Burton, and although they did not work at night as he wished them to do, they labored steadfastly for ten days

or more before Tom was ready to announce what it was he had hoped to discover, and whether or not he had found it. For a day or two I watched the workmen from time to time, but after that I kept away, preferring to await the result of my friend's operations. He evidently expected to find something worth having, and whether he was successful or not, it suited me better to know the truth all at once and not by degrees.

On the morning of the eleventh day Tom came into the room where I was reading and sat down near me. His face was pale, his eyes glittering. "Old friend," said he, and as he spoke I noticed that his voice was a little husky, although it was plain enough that his emotion was not occasioned by bad fortune—"my good old friend, I have found out what made the bottom of your gravel-pit so uncomfortably cold. You need not doubt what I am going to tell you, for my excavations have been complete and thorough enough to make me sure of what I say. Don't you remember that I told you that ages ago there was a vast glacier in the country which stretches from here to the mountains? Well, sir, the foot of that glacier must have reached further this way than is generally supposed. At any rate a portion of it did extend in this direction as far as this bit of the world which is now yours. This end or spur of the glacier, nearly a quarter of a mile in width, I should say, and pushing before it a portion of the terminal

moraine on which you live, came slowly toward the valley until suddenly it detached itself from the main glacier and disappeared from sight. That is to say, my boy"—and as he spoke Tom sprang to his feet, too excited to sit any longer —"it descended to the bowels of the earth, at least for a considerable distance in that direction. Now you want to know how this happened. Well, I'll tell you. In this part of the country there are scattered about here and there great caves. Geologists know one or two of them, and it is certain that there are others undiscovered. Well, sir, your glacier spur discovered one of them, and when it had lain over the top of it for an age or two, and had grown bigger and bigger, and heavier and heavier, it at last burst through the rock roof of the cave, snapping itself from the rest of the glacier and falling in one vast mass to the bottom of the subterranean abyss. Walter, it is there now. The rest of the glacier came steadily down; the moraines were forced before it; they covered up this glacier spur, this broken fragment, and by the time the climate changed and the average of temperature rose above that of the glacial period, this vast sunken mass of ice was packed away below the surface of the earth, out of the reach of the action of friction, or heat, or moisture, or anything else which might destroy it. And through all the long procession of centuries that broken end of the glacier has been lying in your terminal

moraine. It is there now. It is yours, Walter Cuthbert. It is an ice-mine. It is wealth, and so far as I can make out, it is nearly all upon your land. To you is the possession, but to me is the glory of the discovery. A bit of the glacial period kept in a cave for us! It is too wonderful to believe! Walter, have you any brandy?"

It may well be supposed that by this time I was thoroughly awakened to the importance and the amazing character of my friend's discovery, and I hurried with him to the scene of operations. There he explained everything and showed me how, by digging away a portion of the face of the bluff, he had found that this vast fragment of the glacier, which had been so miraculously preserved, ended in an irregularly perpendicular wall, which extended downward he knew not how far, and the edge of it on its upper side had been touched by my workmen in digging their pit. "It was the gradual melting of the upper end of this glacier," said Tom, "probably more elevated than the lower end, that made your dell. I wondered why the depression did not extend further up toward the spot where the foot of the glacier was supposed to have been. This end of the fragment, being sunk in deeper and afterward covered up more completely, probably never melted at all."

"It is amazing—astounding," said I; "but what of it, now that we have found it?"

"What of it?" cried Tom, and his whole form

trembled as he spoke. "You have here a source of wealth, of opulence which shall endure for the rest of your days. Here at your very door, where it can be taken out and transported with the least possible trouble, is ice enough to supply the town, the county, yes, I might say, the State, for hundreds of years. No, sir, I can not go in to supper. I can not eat. I leave to you the business and practical part of this affair. I go to report upon its scientific features."

"Agnes," I exclaimed, as I walked to the house with my hands clasped and my eyes raised to the sky, "the glacial period has given thee to me!"

This did not immediately follow, although I went that very night to Mr. Havelot and declared to him that I was now rich enough to marry his daughter. He laughed at me in a manner which was very annoying, and made certain remarks which indicated that he thought it probable that it was not the roof of the cave, but my mind, which had given way under the influence of undue pressure.

The contemptuous manner in which I had been received aroused within me a very unusual state of mind. While talking to Mr. Havelot I heard not far away in some part of the house a voice singing. It was the voice of Agnes, and I believed she sang so that I could hear her. But as her sweet tones reached my ear there came to me at the same time the harsh, contemptuous words of her father. I left the house determined to

crush that man to the earth beneath a superincumbent mass of ice—or the evidence of the results of the ownership of such a mass—which would make him groan and weep as he apologized to me for his scornful and disrespectful utterances and at the same time offered me the hand of his daughter.

When the discovery of the ice-mine, as it grew to be called, became generally known, my grounds were crowded by sightseers, and reporters of newspapers were more plentiful than squirrels. But the latter were referred to Burton, who would gladly talk to them as long as they could afford to listen, and I felt myself at last compelled to shut my gates to the first.

I had offers of capital to develop this novel source of wealth, and I accepted enough of this assistance to enable me to begin operations on a moderate scale. It was considered wise not to uncover any portion of the glacier spur, but to construct an inclined shaft down to its wall-like end and from this tunnel into the great mass. Immediately the leading ice company of the neighboring town contracted with me for all the ice I could furnish, and the flood-gates of affluence began slowly to rise.

The earliest, and certainly one of the greatest, benefits which came to me from this bequest from the unhistoric past was the new energy and vigor with which my mind and body were now infused. My old, careless method of life and my recent

melancholy, despairing mood were gone, and I now began to employ myself upon the main object of my life with an energy and enthusiasm almost equal to that of my friend, Tom Burton. This present object of my life was to prepare my home for Agnes.

The great piles of gravel which my men had dug from the well-like pit were spread upon the roadways and rolled smooth and hard; my lawn was mowed; my flower-beds and borders put in order; useless bushes and undergrowth cut out and cleared away; my outbuildings were repaired and the grounds around my house rapidly assumed their old appearance of neatness and beauty.

Ice was very scarce that summer, and, as the wagons wound away from the opening of the shaft which led down to the glacier, carrying their loads to the nearest railway station, so money came to me; not in large sums at first, for preparations had not yet been perfected for taking out the ice in great quantities, but enough to enable me to go on with my work as rapidly as I could plan it. I set about renovating and brightening and newly furnishing my house. Whatever I thought that Agnes would like I bought and put into it. I tried to put myself in her place as I selected the paper-hangings and the materials with which to cover the furniture.

Sometimes, while thus employed selecting ornaments or useful articles for my house, and

using as far as was possible the taste and judgment of another instead of my own, the idea came to me that perhaps Agnes had never heard of my miraculous good fortune. Certainly her father would not be likely to inform her, and perhaps she still thought of me, if she thought at all, as the poor young man from whom she had been obliged to part because he was poor.

But whether she knew that I was growing rich, or whether she thought I was becoming poorer and poorer, I thought only of the day when I could go to her father and tell him that I was able to take his daughter and place her in a home as beautiful as that in which she now lived, and maintain her with all the comforts and luxuries which he could give her.

One day I asked my faithful cook, who also acted as my housekeeper and general supervisor, to assist me in making out a list of china which I intended to purchase.

"Are you thinking of buying china, sir?" she asked. "We have now quite as much as we really need."

"Oh, yes," said I, "I shall get complete sets of everything that can be required for a properly furnished household."

Susan gave a little sigh. "You are spendin' a lot of money, sir, and some of it for things that a single gentleman would be likely not to care very much about; and if you was to take it into your head to travel and stay away for a year or two,

there's a good many things you've bought that would look shabby when you come back, no matter how careful I might be in dustin' 'em and keepin' 'em covered."

"But I have no idea of traveling," said I. "There's no place so pleasant as this to me."

Susan was silent for a few moments, and then she said: "I know very well why you are doing all this, and I feel it my bounden duty to say to you that there's a chance of its bein' no use. I do not speak without good reason, and I would not do it if I didn't think that it might make trouble lighter to you when it comes."

"What are you talking about, Susan; what do you mean?"

"Well, sir, this is what I mean: It was only last night that my daughter Jane was in Mr. Havelot's dining-room after dinner was over, and Mr. Havelot and a friend of his were sitting there, smoking their cigars and drinking their coffee. She went in and come out again as she was busy takin' away the dishes, and they paid no attention to her, but went on talkin' without knowing, most likely, she was there. Mr. Havelot and the gentleman were talkin' about you, and Jane she heard Mr. Havelot say as plain as anything, and she said she couldn't be mistaken, that even if your nonsensical ice-mine proved to be worth anything, he would never let his daughter marry an ice-man. He spoke most disrespectful of ice-men, sir, and said that it would

make him sick to have a son-in-law whose business it was to sell ice to butchers, and hotels, and grog-shops, and pork-packers, and all that sort of people, and that he would as soon have his daughter marry the man who supplied a hotel with sausages as the one who supplied it with ice to keep those sausages from spoiling. You see, sir, Mr. Havelot lives on his property as his father did before him, and he is a very proud man, with a heart as hard and cold as that ice down under your land; and it's borne in on me very strong, sir, that it would be a bad thing for you to keep on thinkin' that you are gettin' this house all ready to bring Miss Havelot to when you have married her. For if Mr. Havelot keeps on livin', which there's every chance of his doin', it may be many a weary year before you get Miss Agnes, if you ever get her. And havin' said that, sir, I say no more, and I would not have said this much if I hadn't felt it my bounden duty to your father's son to warn him that most likely he was workin' for what he might never get, and so keep him from breakin' his heart when he found out the truth all of a sudden."

With that Susan left me, without offering any assistance in making out a list of china. This was a terrible story; but, after all, it was founded only upon servants' gossip. In this country, even proud, rich men like Mr. Havelot did not have such absurd ideas regarding the source of wealth. Money is money, and whether it is de-

rived from the ordinary products of the earth, from which came much of Mr. Havelot's revenue, or from an extraordinary project such as my glacier spur, it truly could not matter so far as concerned the standing in society of its possessor. What utter absurdity was this which Susan had told me! If I were to go to Mr. Havelot and tell him that I would not marry his daughter because he supplied brewers and bakers with the products of his fields, would he not consider me an idiot? I determined to pay no attention to the idle tale. But alas! determinations of that sort are often of little avail. I did pay attention to it, and my spirits drooped.

The tunnel into the glacier spur had now attained considerable length, and the ice in the interior was found to be of a much finer quality than that first met with, which was of a grayish hue and somewhat inclined to crumble. When the workmen reached a grade of ice as good as they could expect, they began to enlarge the tunnel into a chamber, and from this they proposed to extend tunnels in various directions after the fashion of a coal-mine. The ice was hauled out on sledges through the tunnel and then carried up a wooden railway to the mouth of the shaft.

It was comparatively easy to walk down the shaft and enter the tunnel, and when it happened that the men were not at work I allowed visitors to go down and view this wonderful ice-cavern. The walls of the chamber appeared semi-trans-

parent, and the light of the candles or lanterns gave the whole scene a weird and beautiful aspect. It was almost possible to imagine one's self surrounded by limpid waters, which might at any moment rush upon him and ingulf him.

Every day or two Tom Burton came with a party of scientific visitors, and had I chosen to stop the work of taking out ice, admitted the public and charged a price for admission, I might have made almost as much money as I at that time derived from the sale of the ice. But such a method of profit was repugnant to me.

For several days after Susan's communication to me I worked on in my various operations, endeavoring to banish from my mind the idle nonsense she had spoken of; but one of its effects upon me was to make me feel that I ought not to allow hopes so important to rest upon uncertainties. So I determined that as soon as my house and grounds should be in a condition with which I should for the time be satisfied, I would go boldly to Mr. Havelot, and, casting out of my recollection everything that Susan had said, invite him to visit me and see for himself the results of the discovery of which he had spoken with such derisive contempt. This would be a straightforward and business-like answer to his foolish objections to me, and I believed that in his heart the old gentleman would properly appreciate my action.

About this time there came to my place Aaron

Boyce, an elderly farmer of the neighborhood, and, finding me outside, he seized the opportunity to have a chat with me.

"I tell you what it is, Mr. Cuthbert," said he, "the people in this neighborhood hasn't give you credit for what's in you. The way you have fixed up this place, and the short time you have took to do it, is enough to show us now what sort of a man you are; and I tell you, sir, we're proud of you for a neighbor. I don't believe there's another gentleman in this county of your age that could have done what you have done in so short a time. I expect now you will be thinking of getting married and startin' housekeepin' in a regular fashion. That comes just as natural as to set hens in the spring. By the way, have you heard that old Mr. Havelot's thinkin' of goin' abroad? I didn't believe he would ever do that again, because he's gettin' pretty well on in years, but old men will do queer things as well as young ones."

"Going abroad!" I cried. "Does he intend to take his daughter with him?"

Mr. Aaron Boyce smiled grimly. He was a great old gossip, and he had already obtained the information he wanted. "Yes," he said, "I've heard it was on her account he's going. She's been kind of weakly lately, they tell me, and hasn't took to her food, and the doctors has said that what she wants is a sea voyage and a change to foreign parts."

Going abroad! Foreign parts! This was more terrible than anything I had imagined. I would go to Mr. Havelot that very evening, the only time which I would be certain to find him at home, and talk to him in a way which would be sure to bring him to his senses, if he had any. And if I should find that he had no sense of propriety or justice, no sense of his duty to his fellow-man and to his offspring, then I would begin a bold fight for Agnes, a fight which I would not give up until, with her own lips, she told me that it would be useless. I would follow her to Kentucky, to Europe, to the uttermost ends of the earth. I could do it now. The frozen deposits in my terminal moraine would furnish me with the means. I walked away and left the old farmer standing grinning. No doubt my improvements and renovations had been the subject of gossip in the neighborhood, and he had come over to see if he could find out anything definite in regard to the object of them. He had succeeded, but he had done more: he had nerved me to instantly begin the conquest of Agnes, whether by diplomacy or war.

I was so anxious to begin this conquest that I could scarcely wait for the evening to come. At the noon hour, when the ice-works were deserted, I walked down the shaft and into the ice-chamber to see what had been done since my last visit. I decided to insist that operations upon a larger scale should be immediately begun, in order that

I might have plenty of money with which to carry on my contemplated campaign. Whether it was one of peace or war, I should want all the money I could get.

I took with me a lantern and went around the chamber, which was now twenty-five or thirty feet in diameter, examining the new inroads which had been made upon its walls. There was a tunnel commenced opposite the one by which the chamber was entered, but it had not been opened more than a dozen feet, and it seemed to me that the men had not been working with any very great energy. I wanted to see a continuous stream of ice-blocks from that chamber to the mouth of the shaft.

While grumbling thus I heard behind me a sudden noise like thunder and the crashing of walls, and, turning quickly, I saw that a portion of the roof of the chamber had fallen in. Nor had it ceased to fall. As I gazed, several great masses of ice came down from above and piled themselves upon that which had already fallen.

Startled and frightened, I sprang toward the opening of the entrance tunnel; but, alas! I found that that was the point where the roof had given way, and between me and the outer world was a wall of solid ice through which it would be as impossible for me to break as if it were a barrier of rock. With the quick instinct which comes to men in danger I glanced about to see if the workmen had left their tools; but there were none.

They had been taken outside. Then I stood and gazed stupidly at the mass of fallen ice, which, even as I looked upon it, was cracking and snapping, pressed down by the weight above it, and forming itself into an impervious barrier without crevice or open seam.

Then I madly shouted. But of what avail were shouts down there in the depths of the earth? I soon ceased this useless expenditure of strength, and, with my lantern in my hand, began to walk around the chamber, throwing the light upon the walls and the roof. I became impressed with the fear that the whole cavity might cave in at once and bury me here in a tomb of ice. But I saw no cracks, nor any sign of further disaster. But why think of anything more? Was not this enough? For, before that ice-barrier could be cleared away, would I not freeze to death?

I now continued to walk, not because I expected to find anything or do anything, but simply to keep myself warm by action. As long as I could move about I believed that there was no immediate danger of succumbing to the intense cold; for, when a young man, traveling in Switzerland, I had been in the cave of a glacier, and it was not cold enough to prevent some old women from sitting there to play the zither for the sake of a few coppers from visitors. I could not expect to be able to continue walking until I should be rescued, and if I sat down, or by chance slept from exhaustion, I must perish.

The more I thought of it, the more sure I became that in any case I must perish. A man in a block of ice could have no chance of life. And Agnes! Oh, Heavens! what demon of the ice had leagued with old Havelot to shut me up in this frozen prison? For a long time I continued to walk, beat my body with my arms and stamp my feet. The instinct of life was strong within me. I would live as long as I could, and think of Agnes. When I should be frozen I could not think of her.

Sometimes I stopped and listened. I was sure I could hear noises, but I could not tell whether they were above me or not. In the centre of the ice-barrier, about four feet from the ground, was a vast block of the frozen substance which was unusually clear and seemed to have nothing on the other side of it; for through it I could see flickers of light, as though people were going about with lanterns. It was quite certain that the accident had been discovered; for, had not the thundering noise been heard by persons outside, the workmen would have seen what had happened as soon as they came into the tunnel to begin their afternoon operations.

At first I wondered why they did not set to work with a will and cut away this barrier and let me out. But there suddenly came to my mind a reason for this lack of energy which was more chilling than the glistening walls around me: Why should they suppose that I was in the ice-

chamber? I was not in the habit of coming here very often, but I was in the habit of wandering off by myself at all hours of the day. This thought made me feel that I might as well lie down on the floor of this awful cave and die at once. The workmen might think it unsafe to mine any further in this part of the glacier, and begin operations at some other point. I did sit down for a moment, and then I rose involuntarily and began my weary round. Suddenly I thought of looking at my watch. It was nearly five o'clock. I had been more than four hours in that dreadful place, and I did not believe that I could continue to exercise my limbs very much longer. The lights I had seen had ceased. It was quite plain that the workmen had no idea that any one was imprisoned in the cave.

But soon after I had come to this conclusion I saw through the clear block of ice a speck of light, and it became stronger and stronger, until I believed it to be close to the other side of the block. There it remained stationary; but there seemed to be other points of light which moved about in a strange way, and near it. Now I stood by the block watching. When my feet became very cold, I stamped them; but there I stood fascinated, for what I saw was truly surprising. A large coal of fire appeared on the other side of the block; then it suddenly vanished and was succeeded by another coal. This disappeared, and another took its place, each one seeming to come

nearer and nearer to me. Again and again did these coals appear. They reached the centre of the block; they approached my side of it. At last one was so near to me that I thought it was about to break through, but it vanished. Then there came a few quick thuds and the end of a piece of iron protruded from the block. This was withdrawn, and through the aperture there came a voice which said: "Mr. Cuthbert, are you in there?" It was the voice of Agnes!

Weak and cold as I was, fire and energy rushed through me at these words. "Yes," I exclaimed, my mouth to the hole; "Agnes, is that you?"

"Wait a minute," came from the other side of the aperture. "I must make it bigger. I must keep it from closing up."

Again came the coals of fire, running backward and forward through the long hole in the block of ice. I could see now what they were. They were irons used by plumbers for melting solder and that sort of thing, and Agnes was probably heating them in a little furnace outside, and withdrawing them as fast as they cooled. It was not long before the aperture was very much enlarged; and then there came grating through it a long tin tube nearly two inches in diameter, which almost, but not quite, reached my side of the block.

Now came again the voice of Agnes: "Oh, Mr. Cuthbert, are you truly there? Are you crushed? Are you wounded? Are you nearly

frozen? Are you starved? Tell me quickly if you are yet safe."

Had I stood in a palace padded with the softest silk and filled with spicy odors from a thousand rose gardens, I could not have been better satisfied with my surroundings than I was at that moment. Agnes was not two feet away! She was telling me that she cared for me! In a very few words I assured her that I was uninjured. Then I was on the point of telling her I loved her, for I believed that not a moment should be lost in making this avowal. I could not die without her knowing that. But the appearance of a mass of paper at the other end of the tube prevented the expression of my sentiments. This was slowly pushed on until I could reach it. Then there came the words: "Mr. Cuthbert, these are sandwiches. Eat them immediately and walk about while you are doing it. You must keep yourself warm until the men get to you."

Obedient to the slightest wish of this dear creature, I went twice around the cave, devouring the sandwiches as I walked. They were the most delicious food that I had ever tasted. They were given to me by Agnes. I came back to the opening. I could not immediately begin my avowal. I must ask a question first. "Can they get to me?" I inquired. "Is anybody trying to do that? Are they working there by you? I do not hear them at all."

"Oh, no," she answered; they are not working

here. They are on top of the bluff, trying to dig down to you. They were afraid to meddle with the ice here for fear that more of it might come down and crush you and the men, too. Oh, there has been a dreadful excitement since it was found that you were in there!"

"How could they know I was here?" I asked.

"It was your old Susan who first thought of it. She saw you walking toward the shaft about noon, and then she remembered that she had not seen you again; and when they came into the tunnel here they found one of the lanterns gone and the big stick you generally carry lying where the lantern had been. Then it was known that you must be inside. Oh, then there was an awful time! The foreman of the ice-men examined everything, and said they must dig down to you from above. He put his men to work; but they could do very little, for they had hardly any spades. Then they sent into town for help and over to the new park for the Italians working there. From the way these men set to work you might have thought that they would dig away the whole bluff in about five minutes; but they didn't. Nobody seemed to know what to do, or how to get to work; and the hole they made when they did begin was filled up with men almost as fast as they even threw out the stones and gravel. I don't believe anything would have been done properly if your friend, Mr. Burton, hadn't happened to

come with two scientific gentlemen, and since that he has been directing everything. You can't think what a splendid fellow he is! I fairly adored him when I saw him giving his orders and making everybody skip around in the right way."

"Tom is a very good man," said I; "but it is his business to direct that sort of work, and it is not surprising that he knows how to do it. But, Agnes, they may never get down to me, and we do not know that this roof may not cave in upon me at any moment; and before this or anything else happens I want to tell you—"

"Mr. Cuthbert," said Agnes, "is there plenty of oil in your lantern? It would be dreadful if it were to go out and leave you there in the dark. I thought of that and brought you a little bottle of kerosene so that you can fill it. I am going to push the bottle through now, if you please." And with this a large phial, cork end foremost, came slowly through the tube, propelled by one of the soldering irons. Then came Agnes's voice: "Please fill your lantern immediately, because if it goes out you can not find it in the dark; and then walk several times around the cave, for you have been standing still too long already."

I obeyed these injunctions, but in two or three minutes was again at the end of the tube. "Agnes," said I, "how did you happen to come here? Did you contrive in your own mind this method of communicating with me?"

"Oh, yes; I did," she said. "Everybody said

that this mass of ice must not be meddled with, but I knew very well it would not hurt it to make a hole through it."

"But how did you happen to be here?" I asked.

"Oh, I ran over as soon as I heard of the accident. Everybody ran here. The whole neighborhood is on top of the bluff; but nobody wanted to come into the tunnel, because they were afraid that more of it might fall in. So I was able to work here all by myself, and I am very glad of it. I saw the soldering iron and the little furnace outside of your house where the plumbers had been using them, and I brought them here myself. Then I thought that a simple hole through the ice might soon freeze up again, and if you were alive inside I could not do anything to help you; and so I ran home and got my diploma case, that had had one end melted out of it, and I brought that to stick in the hole. I'm so glad that it is long enough, or almost."

"Oh, Agnes," I cried, "you thought of all this for me?"

"Why, of course, Mr. Cuthbert," she answered, before I had a chance to say anything more. "You were in great danger of perishing before the men got to you, and nobody seemed to think of any way to give you immediate relief. And don't you think that a collegiate education is a good thing for girls—at least, that it was for me?"

"Agnes," I exclaimed, "please let me speak. I want to tell you, I must tell you—"

But the voice of Agnes was clearer than mine and it overpowered my words. "Mr. Cuthbert," she said, "we can not both speak through this tube at the same time in opposite directions. I have here a bottle of water for you, but I am very much afraid it will not go through the diploma case."

"Oh, I don't want any water," I said. "I can eat ice if I am thirsty. What I want is to tell you—"

"Mr. Cuthbert," said she, "you must not eat that ice. Water that was frozen countless ages ago may be very different from the water of modern times, and might not agree with you. Don't touch it, please. I am going to push the bottle through if I can. I tried to think of everything that you might need and brought them all at once; because, if I could not keep the hole open, I wanted to get them to you without losing a minute."

Now the bottle came slowly through. It was a small beer-bottle, I think, and several times I was afraid it was going to stick fast and cut off communication between me and the outer world —that is to say, between me and Agnes. But at last the cork and the neck appeared, and I pulled it through. I did not drink any of it, but immediately applied my mouth to the tube.

"Agnes," I said, "my dear Agnes, really you must not prevent me from speaking. I can not delay another minute. This is an awful position

for me to be in, and as you don't seem to realize—"

"But I do realize, Mr. Cuthbert, that if you don't walk about you will certainly freeze before you can be rescued. Between every two or three words you want to take at least one turn around that place. How dreadful it would be if you were suddenly to become benumbed and stiff! Everybody is thinking of that. The best diggers that Mr. Burton had were three colored men; but after they had gone down nothing like as deep as a well, they came up frightened and said they would not dig another shovelful for the whole world. Perhaps you don't know it, but there's a story about the neighborhood that the negro hell is under your property. You know many of the colored peoeple expect to be everlastingly punished with ice and not with fire—"

"Agnes," I interrupted, "I am punished with ice and fire both. Please let me tell you—"

"I was going on to say, Mr. Cuthbert," she interrupted, "that when the Italians heard why the colored men had come out of the hole they would not go in either, for they are just as afraid of everlasting ice as the negroes are, and were sure that if the bottom came out of that hole they would fall into a frozen lower world. So there was nothing to do but to send for paupers, and they are working now. You know paupers have to do what they are told without regard to their beliefs. They got a dozen of them from the poor-

house. Somebody said they just threw them into the hole. Now I must stop talking, for it is time for you to walk around again. Would you like another sandwich?"

"Agnes," said I, endeavoring to speak calmly, "all I want is to be able to tell you—"

"And when you walk, Mr. Cuthbert, you had better keep around the edge of the chamber, for there is no knowing when they may come through. Mr. Burton and the foreman of the ice-men measured the bluff so that they say the hole they are making is exactly over the middle of the chamber you are in, and if you walk around the edge the pieces may not fall on you."

"If you don't listen to me, Agnes," I said, "I'll go and sit anywhere, everywhere, where death may come to me quickest. Your coldness is worse than the coldness of the cave. I can not bear it."

"But, Mr. Cuthbert," said Agnes, speaking, I thought, with some agitation, "I have been listening to you, and what more can you possibly have to say? If there is anything you want, let me know. I will run and get it for you."

"There is no need that you should go away to get what I want," I said. "It is there with you. It is you."

"Mr. Cuthbert," said Agnes, in a very low voice, but so distinctly that I could hear every word, "don't you think it would be better for you to give your whole mind to keeping yourself

warm and strong? For if you let yourself get benumbed you may sink down and freeze."

"Agnes," I said, "I will not move from this little hole until I have told you that I love you, that I have no reason to care for life or rescue unless you return my love, unless you are willing to be mine. Speak quickly to me, Agnes, because I may not be rescued and may never know whether my love for you is returned or not."

At this moment there was a tremendous crash behind me, and, turning, I saw a mass of broken ice upon the floor of the cave, with a cloud of dust and smaller fragments still falling. And then with a great scratching and scraping, and a howl loud enough to waken the echoes of all the lower regions, down came a red-headed, drunken shoemaker. I can not say that he was drunk at that moment, but I knew the man the moment I saw his carroty poll, and it was drink which had sent him to the poorhouse.

But the sprawling and howling cobbler did not reach the floor. A rope had been fastened around his waist to prevent a fall in case the bottom of the pit should suddenly give way, and he hung dangling in mid air with white face and distended eyes, cursing and swearing and vociferously entreating to be pulled up. But before he received any answer from above, or I could speak to him, there came through the hole in the roof of the cave a shower of stones and gravel, and with them

a frantic Italian, his legs and arms outspread, his face wild with terror.

Just as he appeared in view he grasped the rope of the cobbler, and, though in a moment he came down heavily upon the floor of the chamber, this broke his fall, and he did not appear to be hurt. Instantly he crouched low and almost upon all fours, and began to run around the chamber, keeping close to the walls and screaming, I suppose to his saints, to preserve him from the torments of the frozen damned.

In the midst of this hubbub came the voice of Agnes through the hole: "Oh, Mr. Cuthbert, what has happened? Are you alive?"

I was so disappointed by the appearance of these wretched interlopers at the moment it was about to be decided whether my life—should it last for years, or but for a few minutes—was to be black or bright, and I was so shaken and startled by the manner of their entry upon the scene, that I could not immediately shape the words necessary to inform Agnes what had happened. But, collecting my faculties, I was about to speak, when suddenly, with the force of the hind leg of a mule, I was pushed away from the aperture, and the demoniac Italian clapped his great mouth to the end of the tube and roared through it a volume of oaths and supplications. I attempted to thrust aside the wretched being, but I might as well have tried to move the ice barrier itself. He had perceived that some one

outside was talking to me, and in his frenzy he was imploring that some one should let him out.

While still endeavoring to move the man, I was seized by the arm, and turning, beheld the pallid face of the shoemaker. They had let him down so that he reached the floor. He tried to fall on his knees before me, but the rope was so short that he was able to go only part of the way down, and presented a most ludicrous appearance, with his toes scraping the icy floor and his arms thrown out as if he were paddling like a tadpole. "Oh, have mercy upon me, sir," he said, "and help me get out of this dreadful place. If you go to the hole and call up it's you, they will pull me up; but if they get you out first they will never think of me. I am a poor pauper, sir, but I never did nothin' to be packed in ice before I am dead."

Noticing that the Italian had left the end of the aperture in the block of ice, and that he was now shouting up the open shaft, I ran to the channel of communication which my Agnes had opened for me, and called through it; but the dear girl had gone.

The end of a ladder now appeared at the opening in the roof, and this was let down until it reached the floor. I started toward it, but before I had gone half the distance the frightened shoemaker and the maniac Italian sprang upon it, and, with shrieks and oaths, began a maddening fight for possession of the ladder. They might quickly have gone up one after the other, but each

had no thought but to be first; and as one seized the rounds he was pulled away by the other, until I feared the ladder would be torn to pieces. The shoemaker finally pushed his way up a little distance, when the Italian sprang upon his back, endeavoring to climb over him; and so on they went up the shaft, fighting, swearing, kicking, scratching, shaking and wrenching the ladder, which had been tied to another one in order to increase its length, so that it was in danger of breaking, and tearing at each other in a fashion which made it wonderful that they did not both tumble headlong downward. They went on up, so completely filling the shaft with their struggling forms and their wild cries that I could not see or hear anything, and was afraid, in fact, to look up toward the outer air.

As I was afterward informed, the Italian, who had slipped into the hole by accident, ran away like a frightened hare the moment he got his feet on firm ground, and the shoemaker sat down and swooned. By this performance he obtained from a benovolent bystander a drink of whiskey, the first he had had since he was committed to the poorhouse.

But a voice soon came down the shaft calling to me. I recognized it as that of Tom Burton, and replied that I was safe, and that I was coming up the ladder. But in my attempt to climb, I found that I was unable to do so. Chilled and stiffened by the cold and weakened by fatigue

and excitement, I believe I never should have been able to leave that ice chamber if my faithful friend had not come down the ladder and vigorously assisted me to reach the outer air.

Seated on the ground, my back against a great oak tree, I was quickly surrounded by a crowd of my neighbors, the workmen and the people who had been drawn to the spot by the news of the strange accident, to gaze at me as if I were some unknown being excavated from the bowels of the earth. I was sipping some brandy and water which Burton had handed me, when Aaron Boyce pushed himself in front of me.

"Well, sir," he said, "I am mighty glad you got out of that scrape. I'm bound to say I didn't expect you would. I have been sure all along that it wasn't right to meddle with things that go agin Nature, and I haven't any doubt that you'll see that for yourself and fill up all them tunnels and shafts you've made. The ice that comes on ponds and rivers was good enough for our forefathers, and it ought to be good enough for us. And as for this cold stuff you find in your gravel-pit, I don't believe it's ice at all; and if it is, like as not it's made of some sort of pizen stuff that freezes easier than water. For everybody knows that water don't freeze in a well, and if it don't do that, why should it do it in any kind of a hole in the ground? So perhaps it's just as well that you did git shut up there, sir, and find out for yourself what a dangerous thing it is to fool with

Nature and try to git ice from the bottom of the ground instead of the top of the water."

This speech made me angry, for I knew that old Boyce was a man who was always glad to get hold of anything which had gone wrong and try to make it worse; but I was too weak to answer him.

This, however, would not have been necessary, for Tom Burton turned upon him. "Idiot," said he, "if that is your way of thinking you might as well say that if a well caves in you should never again dig for water, or that nobody should have a cellar under his house for fear that the house should fall into it. There's no more danger of the ice beneath us ever giving way again than there is that this bluff should crumble under our feet. That break in the roof of the ice tunnel was caused by my digging away the face of the bluff very near that spot. The high temperature of the outer air weakened the ice, and it fell. But down here, under this ground and secure from the influences of the heat of the outer air, the mass of ice is more solid than rock. We will build a brick arch over the place where the accident happened, and then there will not be a safer mine on this continent than this ice-mine will be."

This was a wise and diplomatic speech from Burton, and it proved to be of great service to me; for the men who had been taking out ice had been a good deal frightened by the fall of the tunnel, and when it was proved that what Burton

had said in regard to the cause of the weakening of the ice was entirely correct, they became willing to go to work again.

I now began to feel stronger and better, and, rising to my feet, I glanced here and there into the crowd, hoping to catch a sight of Agnes. But I was not very much surprised at not seeing her, because she would naturally shrink from forcing herself into the midst of this motley company; but I felt that I must go and look for her without the loss of a minute, for if she should return to her father's house I might not be able to see her again.

On the outskirts of the crowd I met Susan, who was almost overpowered with joy at seeing me safe again. I shook her by the hand, but, without replying to her warm-hearted protestations of thankfulness and delight, I asked her if she had seen Miss Havelot.

"Miss Agnes!" she exclaimed. "Why, no sir; I expect she's at home; and if she did come here with the rest of the neighbors I didn't see her; for when I found out what had happened, sir, I was so weak that I sat down in the kitchen all of a lump, and have just had strength enough to come out."

"Oh, I know she was here," I cried; "I am sure of that, and I do hope she's not gone home again."

"Know she was here!" exclaimed Susan. "Why, how on earth could you know that?"

I did not reply that it was not on the earth but under it, that I became aware of the fact, but hurried toward the Havelot house, hoping to overtake Agnes if she had gone that way. But I did not see her, and suddenly a startling idea struck me, and I turned and ran home as fast as I could go. When I reached my grounds I went directly to the mouth of the shaft. There was nobody there, for the crowd was collected into a solid mass on the top of the bluff, listening to a lecture from Tom Burton, who deemed it well to promote the growth of interest and healthy opinion in regard to his wonderful discovery and my valuable possession. I hurried down the shaft, and near the end of it, just before it joined the ice tunnel, I beheld Agnes sitting upon the wooden track. She was not unconscious, for as I approached she slightly turned her head. I sprang toward her; I kneeled beside her; I took her in my arms. "Oh, Agnes, dearest Agnes," I cried, "what is the matter? What has happened to you? Has a piece of ice fallen upon you? Have you slipped and hurt yourself?"

She turned her beautiful eyes up toward me and for a moment did not speak. Then she said: "And they got you out? And you are in your right mind?"

"Right mind!" I exclaimed. "I have never been out of my mind. What are you thinking of?"

"Oh, you must have been," she said, "when you screamed at me in that horrible way. I was so frightened that I fell back, and I must have fainted."

Tremulous as I was with love and anxiety, I could not help laughing. "Oh, my dear Agnes, I did not scream at you. That was a crazed Italian who fell through the hole that they dug." Then I told her what had happened.

She heaved a gentle sigh. "I am so glad to hear that," she said. "There was one thing that I was thinking about just before you came and which gave me a little bit of comfort; the words and yells I heard were dreadfully oniony, and somehow or other I could not connect that sort of thing with you."

It now struck me that during this conversation I had been holding my dear girl in my arms, and she had not shown the slightest sign of resistance or disapprobation. This made my heart beat high.

"Oh, Agnes," I said, "I truly believe you love me or you would not have been here, you would not have done for me all that you did. Why did you not answer me when I spoke to you through that wall of ice, through the hole your dear love had made in it? Why, when I was in such a terrible situation, not knowing whether I was to die or live, did you not comfort my heart with one sweet word?"

"Oh, Walter," she answered, "it wasn't at all

necessary for you to say all that you did say, for I had suspected it before, and as soon as you began to call me Agnes I knew, of course, how you felt about it. And, besides, it really was necessary that you should move about to keep yourself from freezing. But the great reason for my not encouraging you to go on talking in that way was that I was afraid people might come into the tunnel, and as, of course, you would not know that they were there, you would go on making love to me through my diploma case, and you know I should have perished with shame if I had had to stand there with that old Mr. Boyce, and I don't know who else, listening to your words, which were very sweet to me, Walter, but which would have sounded awfully funny to them."

When she said that my words had been sweet to her I dropped the consideration of all other subjects.

When, about ten minutes afterward, we came out of the shaft we were met by Susan.

"Bless my soul and body, Mr. Cuthbert!" she exclaimed. "Did you find that young lady down there in the centre of the earth? It seems to me as if everything that you want comes to you out of the ground. But I have been looking for you to tell you that Mr. Havelot has been here after his daughter, and I'm sure if he had known where she was, he would have been scared out of his wits."

"Father here!" exclaimed Agnes. "Where is he now?"

"I think he has gone home, miss. Indeed I'm sure of it; for my daughter Jennie, who was over here the same as all the other people in the county, I truly believe told him—and I was proud she had the spirit to speak up that way to him—that your heart was almost broke when you heard about Mr. Cuthbert being shut up in the ice, and that most likely you was in your own room a-cryin' your eyes out. When he heard that he stood lookin' all around the place, and he asked me if he might go in the house; and when I told him he was most welcome, he went in. I offered to show him about, which he said was no use, that he had been there often enough; and he went everywhere, I truly believe, except in the garret and the cellar. And after he got through with that he went out to the barn and then walked home."

"I must go to him immediately," said Agnes.

"But not alone," said I. And together we walked through the woods, over the little field and across the Havelot lawn to the house. We were told that the old gentleman was in his library, and together we entered the room. Mr. Havelot was sitting by a table on which were lying several open volumes of an encyclopedia. When he turned and saw us, he closed his book, pushed back his chair and took off his spectacles. "Upon my word, sir," he cried; "and so the first

thing you do after they pull you out of the earth is to come here and break my commands."

"I came on the invitation of your daughter, sir."

"And what right has she to invite you, I'd like to know?"

"She has every right, for to her I owe my existence."

"What rabid nonsense!" exclaimed the old gentleman. "People don't owe their existence to the silly creatures they fall in love with."

"I assure you I am correct, sir." And then I related to him what his daughter had done, and how through her angelic agency my rescuers had found me a living being instead of a frozen corpse.

"Stuff!" said Mr. Havelot. "People can live in a temperature of thirty-two degrees above zero all winter. Out in Minnesota they think that's hot. And you gave him victuals and drink through your diploma case! Well, miss, I told you that if you tried to roast chestnuts in that diploma case the bottom would come out."

"But you see, father," said Agnes, earnestly, "the reason I did that was because when I roasted them in anything shallow they popped into the fire, but they could not jump out of the diploma case."

"Well, something else seems to have jumped out of it," said the old gentleman, "and something with which I am not satisfied. I have been

looking over these books, sir, and have read the articles on ice, glaciers and caves, and I find no record of anything in the whole history of the world which in the least resembles the cock-and-bull story I am told about the butt-end of a glacier which tumbled into a cave in your ground, and has been lying there through all the geological ages, and the eras of formation, and periods of animate existence down to the days of Noah, and Moses, and Methuselah, and Rameses II, and Alexander the Great, and Martin Luther, and John Wesley, to this day, for you to dig out and sell to the Williamstown Ice Co."

"But that's what happened, sir," said I.

"And besides, father," added Agnes, "the gold and silver that people take out of mines may have been in the ground as long as that ice has been."

"Bosh!" said Mr. Havelot. "The cases are not at all similar. It is simply impossible that a piece of a glacier should have fallen into a cave and been preserved in that way. The temperature of caves is always above the freezing-point, and that ice would have melted a million years before you were born."

"But, father," said Agnes, "the temperature of caves filled with ice must be very much lower than that of common caves."

"And apart from that," I added, "the ice is still there, sir."

"That doesn't make the slightest difference," he replied. "It's against all reason and common-

sense that such a thing could have happened. Even if there ever was a glacier in this part of the country and if the lower portion of it did stick out over an immense hole in the ground, that protruding end would never have broken off and tumbled in. Glaciers are too thick and massive for that."

"But the glacier is there, sir," said I, "in spite of your own reasoning."

"And then again," continued the old gentleman, "if there had been a cave and a projecting spur the ice would have gradually melted and dripped into the cave, and we would have had a lake and not an ice-mine. It is an absurdity."

"But it's there, notwithstanding," said I.

"And you can not subvert facts, you know, father," added Agnes.

"Confound facts!" he cried. "I base my arguments on sober, cool-headed reason; and there's nothing that can withstand reason. The thing's impossible and, therefore, it has never happened. I went over to your place, sir, when I heard of the accident, for the misfortunes of my neighbors interest me, no matter what may be my opinion of them, and when I found that you had been extricated from your ridiculous predicament, I went through your house, and I was pleased to find it in as good or better condition than I had known it in the days of your respected father. I was glad to see the improvement in your circumstances; but when I am told,

sir, that your apparent prosperity rests upon such an absurdity as a glacier in a gravel hill, I can but smile with contempt, sir."

I was getting a little tired of this. "But the glacier is there, sir," I said, "and I am taking out ice every day, and have reason to believe that I can continue to take it out for the rest of my life. With such facts as these before me, I am bound to say, sir, that I don't care in the least about reason."

"And I am here, father," said Agnes, coming close to me, "and here I want to continue for the rest of my days."

The old gentleman looked at her. "And, I suppose," he said, "that you, too, don't in the least care about reason?"

"Not a bit," said Agnes.

"Well," said Mr. Havelot, rising, "I have done all I can to make you two listen to reason, and I can do no more. I despair of making sensible human beings of you, and so you might as well go on acting like a couple of ninny-hammers."

"Do ninny-hammers marry and settle on the property adjoining yours, sir?" I asked.

"Yes, I suppose they do," he said. "And when the aboriginal ice-house, or whatever the ridiculous thing is that they have discovered, gives out, I suppose that they can come to a reasonable man and ask him for a little money to buy bread and butter."

Two years have passed, and Agnes and the glacier are still mine; great blocks of ice now flow in almost a continuous stream from the mine to the railroad station, and in a smaller but quite as continuous stream an income flows in upon Agnes and me; and from one of the experimental excavations made by Tom Burton on the bluff comes a stream of ice-cold water running in a sparkling brook a-down my dell. On fine mornings before I am up, I am credibly informed that Aaron Boyce may generally be found, in season and out of season, endeavoring to catch the trout with which I am trying to stock that ice-cold stream. The diploma case, which I caused to be carefully removed from the ice-barrier which had imprisoned me, now hangs in my study and holds our marriage certificate.

Near the line-fence which separates his property from mine, Mr. Havelot has sunk a wide shaft. "If the glacier spur under your land was a quarter of a mile wide," he says to me, "it was probably at least a half a mile long; and if that were the case, the upper end of it extends into my place, and I may be able to strike it." He has a good deal of money, this worthy Mr. Havelot, but he would be very glad to increase his riches, whether they are based upon sound reason or ridiculous facts. As for Agnes and myself, no facts or any reason could make us happier than our ardent love and our frigid fortune.

THE INDIAN'S HAND

BY LORIMER STODDARD

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THE men had driven away. Their carts and horses disappeared behind the roll of the low hills. They appeared now and then, like boats on the crest of a wave, further each time. And their laughter and singing and shouts grew fainter as the bushes hid them from sight.

The women and children remained, with two old men to protect them. They might have gone too, the hunters said. "What harm could come in the broad daylight?—the bears and panthers were far away. They'd be back by night, with only two carts to fill."

Then Jim, the crack shot of the settlement, said, "We'll drive home the bears in the carts."

The children shouted and danced as they thought of the sport to come, of the hunters' return with their game, of the bonfires they always built.

One pale woman clung to her husband's arm. "But the Indians!" she said.

That made the men all laugh. "Indians!" they cried; "why, there've been none here for twenty

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years! We drove them away, down there"—pointing across the plain—"to a hotter place than this, where the sand burns their feet and they ride for days for water."

The pale woman murmured, "Ah, but they returned."

"Yes," cried her big husband, whose brown beard covered his chest, "and burned two cabins. Small harm they did, the curs!"

"Hush," said the pale woman, pressing her husband's arm; and the men around were quiet, pretending to fix their saddles, as they glanced at another woman, dressed in black, who turned and went into her house.

"I forgot her boy," said the bearded man, as he gravely picked up his gun.

They started off in the morning cool, toward the mountains where the trees grew. And the long shadows lessened as the sun crept up the sky.

The woman in black stood silent by her door. No one bade her good-by. The other women went back to their houses to work. The children played in the dust; clouds rose as they shouted and ran. A day's freedom lay before them.

But the woman in black still stood by her door, like a spectre in the sunshine, her thin hands clasped together as she gazed away over the plain toward Mexico.

Her face was parched and drawn, as if the sun from the sand had burned into the bone. Her

eyes alone seemed to live; they were hard and bright.

Her house was a little away from the rest, on the crest of a hill facing the desert plain.

She had heard the words of the bearded man: "Small harm the Indians did." Had he forgotten her boy? How could he forget, while she was there to remind them of the dead? Near her house was a small rock roughly marked. The rude letters "Will, gone, '69," she had cut on it with her own hands. It marked the last place where her boy had played. She remembered how she went away softly—so he should not cry to follow her—without a word, without a kiss.

Here her hands beat the side of the house.

"Oh, to have that kiss now and die!" But she had gone, unthinking, up the road where the pale woman lived, then a rosy-cheeked happy bride, not a widow like herself. They laughed and discussed the newcomers at the settlement. It was a holiday, for the men were away over the hills, cutting down trees to build their houses with.

As they talked there idly, they heard what they thought was the shrill bark of dogs running up the hill. Startled, they went to the window. Round the curve of the road came horses wildly galloping, and upon their backs— Here the pale woman shrieked and fled. They were Indians, beating their horses with their bare legs, their black hair streaming in the wind.

Like a flash, she had bolted the door and

barred the shutters as they galloped up. She turned then. Through the open back door she saw the women run screaming up the hill, their children in their arms.

Their children! Where was hers? She stopped as if turned to stone, then undid the door.

They dragged her out by the wrists, by the hair. She fought with them stronger than ten men. But there were twenty; she was alone. The little street was empty. They strangled her, beat down her face, dragged her upon a horse, and, with her crosswise on the saddle, galloped up and down, as they fired the cabins and the sheds. Her hands were shackled, and her eyes blind with blood, but she thought only of her child. "Where could he be?"

There were gunshots. Down the hills like mad came the white men for their wives and children.

Then the Indians turned back toward the plain. They rode past her house.

There, where she had left him, stood the child, dazed with surprise. She held out her arms tied together and called to him to come.

"Fool! fool!" Here the woman in black struck her temples with her hands. "Fool!" Why had she not galloped by and never noticed him?

But she begged, caught at the horse's head, struggled to get to him; and the Indian stopped for a moment in his flight and caught up the child and went on.

Then the thought came to her of the end of that ride—what was to come—after. And she tried to drop the boy, to let him slide gently to the ground; but the Indian held them fast.

Behind, nearer, came the following men, louder the guns. The horse she was on snorted, staggered under the weight of the three, and as they reached the plain the child was torn from her, she was pushed away. But she rose and staggered after them amid the blinding dust. They must take her too. Sobbing, she called to them as she stumbled on. Many times she fell. Then she could go no more.

That was all. Her story ended there, with the thundering of horses' hoofs and the taste of dust in her mouth. They found her there unconscious. Her friends tended her. When she came back to life she asked no questions but left her neighbor's house and came to her door, where she was standing now, and gazed away over the sand where *he* had gone, down toward Mexico.

The years went by, and she was still alone in the house where *two* should have been. And now far off she saw the dust blowing in a long, rolling, pinkish line. But the dust blew so often, and nothing came of it—not even the Indians.

The boy she knew was dead, but they—his murderers—remained, somewhere.

If she could have one now in her power!

The woman in black pondered, as she had so

many times, how she should torture him. No pain could be too horrible. She looked at the fire in the stove, and piled on the logs—the logs that were brought with such trouble from the mountains where the trees grew. She could not make it hot enough. She dropped on her knees and watched the iron grow red. And the letters of the maker's name stamped on it grew distinct, and the word "Congress," half defaced, and the figures "64." Ah, those letters! she could have kissed the spot, for her child had touched it. Charmed by the glow, when left alone, he laid his baby hand flat on it, and burned deep into the palm were those letters, "S S, 64."

She would know him among a million by that mark.

But he was dead. The Indians remained.

The woman in black stood up. Why should she not go to them? There were pools in the plain where she could drink. That would be enough.

The men were away; the women were at work. Who could stop her?

She put on her bonnet and started off down the hill through the green bushes. The air was still crisp, though the sun was hot.

The desert must have an end. She would keep on to Mexico. She walked quickly, and her dress grew gray with dust, and the air scorching, as she reached the plain. But she kept on, and only looked back once at the house on the

hill, and at the window where the pale woman sat.

The dust choked her, and she stumbled, and the sole of one shoe came half off, and slapped, and banged, and delayed her as she walked. She tore it off and went on, but the sand cut and burned her so that she sat down and wept, and wanted to go back for her other pair, the ones she wore on Sundays. The hill, though, looked so distant that she wearily got up and went on, on, till she could go no more, and crept under the shadow of a rock. There was no water near. Her throat was parched, and her temples beat wildly. She must go back and start again, strengthened, fortified. She would start to-morrow, or at night, when the cool would let her get too far to return.

By slow degrees she dragged herself up the hill. The pale woman came out of her house, and nodded, but the woman in black did not smile in return. She closed her door, and went up to her bed, and fell on it, and slept, amid the buzzing of the flies and the fitful flapping of the window-shade in the breeze.

The pale woman sighed and glanced across the plain. The roll of blowing dust was larger, and more regular, and nearer. The woman shuddered as she watched it creep slowly along behind the sand mounds. "It always blows," she said to herself, "but not like that, so steadily, so even." She strained her eyes, but there was only

dust to be seen. Then she thought of a telescope that belonged to the minister's wife, who came from a seaport town, and ran to fetch it. The two women came out with it together, the minister's wife laughing at her friend, she was such a timid thing!

But the pale woman was paler than ever, and trembled so she could not steady it. The laughing one looked through it, and laughed no more.

"I see a head over the mound there," she said.

The pale woman shrieked.

"They are miles away. We may have time."

"For what?"

"To get away."

"They may be friends—"

"They are Indians! White men would not live through that sand. We must go to the woods. Help me. Warn the women. Gather the children. Come."

She rushed into her house. The other still stood and looked.

The dust cloud was a little nearer. In a moment all was wild confusion, names were called, but not loudly, girls sobbed, some carried their little treasures, mothers held their children. All gathered together, hidden from the plain by a house.

The pale woman led out her father, then ran to her neighbor's door. She opened it, and called clearly, but softly, "Mary, Mary." There was no answer. The woman in black, on her bed,

slept on. Her neighbor hesitated, then hurried after the others, as they ran up the low hills toward the mountains, where their men had gone.

The dust cloud grew nearer. Now and then a head could be seen. But all was as still as the grave. The woman in black slept heavily and dreamed that revenge had come at last—that in her hand she held an Indian's head.

The window-shade flapped loudly, and she woke with an apprehension crushing her. She went to the window and looked out. There was no blowing dust upon the plains, and the street was empty. The doors of the houses stood open; a shawl lay in the middle of the road. The woman leaned out and looked toward the woods.

She saw on the crest of a hill the white skirts of the flying women, and then, below, down the road, her ears sharpened, her heart tightening, she heard the soft, regular thumping of horses' feet.

Then she *knew*.

She sat on the edge of the bed. This was what she had waited for! Was it her turn now?—or theirs again?

She could kill *one*.

Where was her gun?

She had loaned it to the men.

But her axe—that was below.

As she started for it, there was a burst of war cries.

She ran down the narrow stairs, and took the axe from its place on the wall.

They were passing her door. The room grew lighter. She turned. One stood in the open doorway, black against the sunshine. She set her teeth hard, hid the axe behind her skirts, watched him motionless.

He stretched out his hand clawlike, and laughed, his eyes gleaming, as catlike he moved nearer. A terror seized her: with a hoarse cry, she sprang up the stairs, flinging down a chair as he followed panting.

Quickly she climbed up the ladder to the loft, threw down the trapdoor, fell on it, bolted it, waited. All was still. Outside she heard the distant yells. She stooped noiselessly and put her ear upon the floor. There was soft breathing underneath, and through a crack in the floor she saw an eye peering up at her.

She stood a long time, motionless, axe in hand, ready.

Her back was to the bolt, but suddenly she *felt* that there was something there. She turned softly. A slim brown hand was almost through a crevice in the floor.

She raised her axe. The slender fingers touched the bolt and gently drew it back.

Then with the force of all her hatred fell the axe upon the wrist. The hand sprang up at her. With a howl of agony the creature fell bumping beneath.

Then all again was still.

Her face was wet and warm with the spattered blood.

Outside she heard the crackling of a burning house, then gunshots far away, and distant shouts. On tiptoe she went to the garret window, and peeped round its edge. Over the hills, quite near, she saw the men returning. One house was blazing—the minister's. The Indians were retreating. Near her door, grazing, stood a riderless horse. *She* knew its owner. As they rode past, they caught at it, but were stopped by a shout from her door. An Indian rushed out, handsome, young, holding aloft a bare right arm without a hand. In his language he shrieked to them for revenge, pointing up with his red wrist to the attic where she stood.

The eyes of the woman shot fire. She leaned far out and shook her fist from the garret window.

"One Indian at least!"

She hurled the axe at them. It fell far short. They fired as they passed, but none hit her. Nearer came the men.

The wounded man leaped to his horse and with a curse rode on. The woman laughed as he passed beneath, then sat down in the dusky loft with a red pool at her feet.

Shortly the men returned. Some went by down the hill, after the Indians. Others put out the fire. All was confusion, bustle, shouts.

Then the women and the children came and added to the din, and the men who had followed returned. But the woman in black sat alone in the loft, till she heard the crowd at her door below, and the voice of the pale woman say:

"Where is Mary?"

She rose and lifted the trap-door—it was unbolted—and went down.

The pale woman came to her, but she pushed her aside, and wiped her face with her sleeve.

"Are they killed? any of them?" she said. Her friend answered, "No, Mary, not one." "No harm this time," said the bearded man. "Except my house, it is burned," said the minister's wife. "We'll soon have another."

"I don't mean *you!*" cried the woman in black. "I mean them—red devils. Have you got any? —killed any? *You*"—this to Jim, who never missed a shot—"you"—this to the bearded man —"have *you* killed any?"

And the men answered, "No."

And one man said, "Their horses were faster than ours."

"Not one!" The woman in black drew herself up proudly. "Yes, one; better than killed. Wait." The women shrunk from her as she darted up the stair. They looked at each other wonderingly. The woman returned with something in her grasp. She flung it on the table. "It is an Indian's hand. His arm will shrivel to the bone. They will leave him some day to die in

the sand." The women shuddered and drew back; the men crowded round, but they did not touch the hand.

"Are you afraid?" said the woman in black. "Afraid of that thing!"

She bent back the fingers and looked in it with a smile of contempt. Her face took an ashen hue: the hand struck the table edge and fell upon the floor. She seemed to be trying to think for a second, then she gave one awful cry, and leaned her face against the wall, with her hands hanging at her side.

The pale woman tried to go to her, but her husband drew her back, and, with a silent crowd around, slowly picked up the hand.

For a second he hesitated, then did as she had done, but gently. He bent back the fingers of the severed hand and read its history written there, "S S, 64," in white letters on the palm.

He remembered then how, twenty years ago, when she brought the child to him, he had tied its little hand in cooling salve.

It was larger now.

The whisper went around, "It is her boy's hand," and they crept toward the door.

The pale woman took a flower from her dress, one she had put there hours before, and placed it in the brown fingers on the table and went out.

The woman did not stir from the wall. "Leave the hand," she said.

"It is there," and the bearded man closed the door gently behind him.

The woman in black turned. Her hard eyes were dim now. She took the hand from the table and undid her dress and placed it in her breast, and went to the window, and watched, far off, a cloud of dust made golden by the sun, as it rolled away across the plain, down toward Mexico.

A MICHIGAN MAN

BY ELIA W. PEATTIE

A MICHIGAN MAN

BY ELIA W. PEATTIE

A PINE forest is nature's expression of solemnity and solitude. Sunlight, rivers, cascades, people, music, laughter, or dancing could not make it gay. With its unceasing reverberations and its eternal shadows, it is as awful and as holy as a cathedral.

Thirty good fellows working together by day and drinking together by night can keep up but a moody imitation of jollity. Spend twenty-five of your forty years, as Luther Dallas did, in this perennial gloom, and your soul—that which enjoys, aspires, competes—will be drugged as deep as if you had quaffed the cup of oblivion. Luther Dallas was counted one of the most experienced axe-men in the northern camps. He could fell a tree with the swift surety of an executioner, and in revenge for his many arboral murders the woodland had taken captive his mind, captured and chained it as Prospero did Ariel. The resounding footsteps of Progress driven on so mercilessly in this mad age could not reach his fastness. It did not concern him that men were thinking, investigating, inventing. His senses responded only to the sonorous music of

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the woods; a steadfast wind ringing metallic melody from the pine-tops contented him as the sound of the sea does the sailor; and dear as the odors of the ocean to the mariner were the resinous scents of the forest to him. Like a sailor, too, he had his superstitions. He had a presentiment that he was to die by one of these trees—that some day, in chopping, the tree would fall upon and crush him as it did his father the day they brought him back to the camp on a litter of pine boughs.

One day the gang boss noticed a tree that Dallas had left standing in a most unwoodman-like manner in the section which was alloted to him.

"What in thunder is that standing there for?" he asked.

Dallas raised his eyes to the pine, towering in stern dignity a hundred feet above them.

"Well," he said, feebly, "I noticed it, but kind-a left it t' the last."

"Cut it down to-morrow," was the response.

The wind was rising, and the tree muttered savagely. Luther thought it sounded like a menace, and turned pale. No trouble has yet been found that will keep a man awake in the keen air of the pineries after he has been swinging his axe all day, but the sleep of the chopper was so broken with disturbing dreams that night that the beads gathered on his brow, and twice he cried aloud. He ate his coarse flap-jacks in the

morning and escaped from the smoky shanty as soon as he could.

"It'll bring bad luck, I'm afraid," he muttered as he went to get his axe from the rack. He was as fond of his axe as a soldier of his musket, but to-day he shouldered it with reluctance. He felt like a man with his destiny before him. The tree stood like a sentinel. He raised his axe, once, twice, a dozen times, but could not bring himself to make a cut in the bark. He walked backward a few steps and looked up. The funereal green seemed to grow darker and darker till it became black. It was the embodiment of sorrow. Was it not shaking giant arms at him? Did it not cry out in angry challenge? Luther did not try to laugh at his fears; he had never seen any humor in life. A gust of wind had someway crept through the dense barricade of foliage that flanked the clearing, and struck him with an icy chill. He looked at the sky: the day was advancing rapidly. He went at his work with an energy as determined as despair. The axe in his practiced hand made clean straight cuts in the trunk, now on this side, now on that. His task was not an easy one, but he finished it with wonderful expedition. After the chopping was finished, the tree stood firm a moment; then, as the tensely strained fibres began a weird moaning, he sprang aside, and stood waiting. In the distance he saw two men hewing a log. The axe-man sent them a shout and threw up his arms for them to look.

The tree stood out clear and beautiful against the gray sky; the men ceased their work and watched it. The vibrations became more violent, and the sounds they produced grew louder and louder till they reached a shrill wild cry. There came a pause; then a deep shuddering groan. The topmost branches began to move slowly, the whole stately bulk swayed, and then shot toward the ground. The gigantic trunk bounded from the stump, recoiled like a cannon, crashed down, and lay conquered, with a roar as of an earthquake, in a cloud of flying twigs and chips.

When the dust had cleared away, the men at the log on the outside of the clearing could not see Luther. They ran to the spot, and found him lying on the ground with his chest crushed in. His fearful eyes had not rightly calculated the distance from the stump to the top of the pine, nor rightly weighed the power of the massed branches, and so, standing spell-bound, watching the descending trunk as one might watch his Nemesis, the rebound came and left him lying worse than dead.

Three months later, when the logs, lopped of their branches, drifted down the streams, the woodman, a human log lopped of his strength, drifted to a great city. A change, the doctor said, might prolong his life. The lumbermen made up a purse, and he started out, not very definitely knowing his destination. He had a sister, much younger than himself, who at the

age of sixteen had married and gone, he believed, to Chicago. That was years ago, but he had an idea that he might find her. He was not troubled by his lack of resources: he did not believe that any man would want for a meal unless he were "shiftless." He had always been able to turn his hand to something.

He felt too ill from the jostling of the cars to notice much of anything on the journey. The dizzy scenes whirling past made him faint, and he was glad to lie with closed eyes. He imagined that his little sister in her pink calico frock and bare feet (as he remembered her) would be at the station to meet him. "Oh, Lu!" she would call from some hiding-place, and he would go and find her.

The conductor stopped by Luther's seat and said that they were in the city at last; but it seemed to the sick man as if they went miles after that, with a multitude of twinkling lights on one side and a blank darkness that they told him was the lake on the other. The conductor again stopped by his seat.

"Well, my man," said he, "how are you feeling?"

Luther, the possessor of the toughest muscles in the gang, felt a sick man's irritation at the tone of pity.

"Oh, I'm all right!" he said, gruffly, and shook off the assistance the conductor tried to offer with his overcoat. "I'm going to my sister's,"

he explained, in answer to the inquiry as to where he was going. The man, somewhat piqued at the spirit in which his overtures were met, left him, and Luther stepped on to the platform. There was a long vista of semi-light, down which crowds of people walked and baggagemen rushed. The building, if it deserved the name, seemed a ruin, and through the arched doors Luther could see men—hackmen—dancing and howling like dervishes. Trains were coming and going, and the whistles and bells kept up a ceaseless clangor. Luther, with his small satchel and uncouth dress, slouched by the crowd unnoticed, and reached the street. He walked amid such an illumination as he had never dreamed of, and paused half blinded in the glare of a broad sheet of electric light that filled a pillared entrance into which many people passed. He looked about him. Above on every side rose great, many-windowed buildings; on the street the cars and carriages thronged, and jostling crowds dashed headlong among the vehicles. After a time he turned down a street that seemed to him a pandemonium filled with madmen. It went to his head like wine, and hardly left him the presence of mind to sustain a quiet exterior. The wind was laden with a penetrating moisture that chilled him as the dry icy breezes from Huron never had done, and the pain in his lungs made him faint and dizzy. He wondered if his red-cheeked little sister could live in one of those vast, impregnable buildings. He

thought of stopping some of those serious-looking men and asking them if they knew her, but he could not muster up the courage. The distressing experience that comes to almost every one some time in life, of losing all identity in the universal humanity, was becoming his. The tears began to roll down his wasted face from loneliness and exhaustion. He grew hungry with longing for the dirty but familiar cabins of the camp, and staggered along with eyes half closed, conjuring visions of the warm interiors, the leaping fires, the groups of laughing men seen dimly through clouds of tobacco smoke.

A delicious scent of coffee met his hungry sense and made him really think he was taking the savory black draught from his familiar tin cup; but the muddy streets, the blinding lights, the cruel, rushing people, were still there. The buildings, however, now became different. They were lower and meaner, with dirty windows. Women laughing loudly crowded about the doors, and the establishments seemed to be equally divided between saloon-keepers, pawnbrokers, and dealers in second-hand clothes. Luther wondered where they all drew their support from. Upon one signboard he read, "Lodgings 10 cents to 50 cents. A Square Meal for 15 cents," and, thankful for some haven, entered. Here he spent his first night and other nights, while his purse dwindled and his strength waned. At last he got a man in a drug store to search the directory for

his sister's residence. They found a name he took to be his brother-in-law's. It was two days later when he found the address—a great many-storied mansion on one of the southern boulevards—and found also that his search had been in vain. Sore and faint, he staggered back to his miserable shelter, only to arise feverish and ill in the morning. He frequented the great shop doors, thronged with brilliantly dressed ladies, and watched to see if his little sister might not dash up in one of those satin-lined coaches and take him where he would be warm and safe and would sleep undisturbed by drunken, ribald songs and loathsome surroundings. There were days when he almost forgot his name, and, striving to remember, would lose his senses for a moment and drift back to the harmonious solitudes of the North and breathe the resin-scented frosty atmosphere. He grew terrified at the blood he coughed from his lacerated lungs, and wondered bitterly why the boys did not come to take him home.

One day, as he painfully dragged himself down a residence street, he tried to collect his thoughts and form some plan for the future. He had no trade, understood no handiwork: he could fell trees! He looked at the gaunt, scrawny, transplanted specimens that met his eye, and gave himself up to the homesickness that filled his soul. He slept that night in the shelter of a stable, and spent his last money in the morning for a biscuit.

He traveled many miles that afternoon looking for something to which he might turn his hand. Once he got permission to carry a hod for half an hour. At the end of that time he fainted. When he recovered, the foreman paid him twenty-five cents. "For God's sake, man, go home," he said. Luther stared at him with a white face and went on.

There came days when he so forgot his native dignity as to beg. He seldom received anything; he was referred to various charitable institutions whose existence he had never heard of.

One morning, when a pall of smoke enveloped the city and the odors of coal-gas refused to lift their nauseating poison through the heavy air, Luther, chilled with dew and famished, awoke to a happier life. The loneliness at his heart was gone. The feeling of hopeless imprisonment that the miles and miles of streets had terrified him with gave place to one of freedom and exaltation. Above him he heard the rasping of pine boughs; his feet trod on a rebounding mat of decay; the sky was as coldly blue as the bosom of Huron. He walked as if on ether, singing a senseless jargon the woodmen had aroused the echoes with:

"Hi yi halloo!
The owl sees you!
Look what you do!
Hi yi halloo!"

Swung over his shoulder was a stick he had used to assist his limping gait, but now trans-

formed into the beloved axe. He would reach the clearing soon, he thought, and strode on like a giant, while people hurried from his path. Suddenly a smooth trunk, stripped of its bark and bleached by weather, arose before him.

"Hi yi halloo!" High went the wasted arm—crash!—a broken staff, a jingle of wires, a maddened, shouting man the centre of a group of amused spectators! A few moments later, four broad-shouldered men in blue had him in their grasp, pinioned and guarded, clattering over the noisy streets behind two spirited horses. They drew after them a troop of noisy, jeering boys, who danced about the wagon like a swirl of autumn leaves. Then came a halt, and Luther was dragged up the steps of a square brick building with a belfry on the top. They entered a large bare room with benches ranged about the walls, and brought him before a man at a desk.

"What is your name?" asked the man at the desk.

"Hi yi halloo!" said Luther.

"He's drunk, sergeant," said one of the men in blue, and the axe-man was led into the basement. He was conscious of an involuntary resistance, a short struggle, and a final shock of pain—then oblivion.

The chopper awoke to the realization of three stone walls and an iron grating in front. Through this he looked out upon a stone flooring across

which was a row of similar apartments. He neither knew nor cared where he was. The feeling of imprisonment was no greater than he had felt on the endless, cheerless streets. He laid himself on the bench that ran along a side wall, and, closing his eyes, listened to the babble of the clear stream and the thunder of the "drive" on its journey. How the logs hurried and jostled! crushing, whirling, ducking, with the merry lads leaping about them with shouts and laughter. Suddenly he was recalled by a voice. Some one handed a narrow tin cup full of coffee and a thick slice of bread through the grating. Across the way he dimly saw a man eating a similar slice of bread. Men in other compartments were swearing and singing. He knew these now for the voices he had heard in his dreams. He tried to force some of the bread down his parched and swollen throat, but failed; the coffee strangled him, and he threw himself upon the bench.

The forest again, the night-wind, the whistle of the axe through the air! Once when he opened his eyes he found it dark! It would soon be time to go to work. He fancied there would be hoar-frost on the trees in the morning. How close the cabin seemed! Ha!—here came his little sister. Her voice sounded like the wind on a spring morning. How loud it swelled now! "Lu! Lu!" she cried.

The next morning the lock-up keeper opened the cell door. Luther lay with his head in a pool

of blood. His soul had escaped from the thrall of the forest.

"Well, well!" said the little fat police justice, when he was told of it. "We ought to have a doctor around to look after such cases."

THE INMATE OF THE DUNGEON

BY W. C. MORROW

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AFTER the Board of State Prison Directors, sitting in session at the prison, had heard and disposed of the complaints and petitions of a number of convicts, the warden announced that all who wished to appear had been heard. Thereupon a certain uneasy and apprehensive expression, which all along had sat upon the faces of the directors, became visibly deeper. The chairman—nervous, energetic, abrupt, incisive man—glanced at a slip of paper in his hand, and said to the warden:

"Send a guard for convict No. 14,208."

The warden started and become slightly pale. Somewhat confused, he haltingly replied, "Why, he has expressed no desire to appear before you."

"Nevertheless, you will send for him at once," responded the chairman.

The warden bowed stiffly and directed a guard to produce the convict. Then, turning to the chairman, he said:

"I am ignorant of your purpose in summoning this man, but of course I have no objection. I

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desire, however, to make a statement concerning him before he appears."

"When we shall have called for a statement from you," boldly responded the chairman, "you may make one."

The warden sank back into his seat. He was a tall, fine-looking man, well-bred and intelligent, and had a kindly face. Though ordinarily cool, courageous, and self-possessed, he was unable to conceal a strong emotion which looked much like fear. A heavy silence fell upon the room, disturbed only by the official stenographer, who was sharpening his pencils. A stray beam of light from the westering sun slipped into the room between the edge of the window-shade and the sash, and fell across the chair reserved for the convict. The uneasy eyes of the warden finally fell upon this beam, and there his glance rested. The chairman, without addressing any one particularly, remarked:

"There are ways of learning what occurs in a prison without the assistance of either the wardens or the convicts."

Just then the guard appeared with the convict, who shambled in painfully and laboriously, as with a string he held up from the floor the heavy iron ball which was chained to his ankles. He was about forty-five years old. Undoubtedly he once had been a man of uncommon physical strength, for a powerful skeleton showed underneath the sallow skin which covered his emaciated

frame. His sallowness was peculiar and ghastly. It was partly that of disease, and partly of something worse; and it was this something that accounted also for his shrunken muscles and manifest feebleness.

There had been no time to prepare him for presentation to the Board. As a consequence, his unstockinged toes showed through his gaping shoes; the dingy suit of prison stripes which covered his gaunt frame was frayed and tattered; his hair had not been recently cut to the prison fashion, and, being rebellious, stood out upon his head like bristles; and his beard, which, like his hair, was heavily dashed with gray, had not been shaved for weeks. These incidents of his appearance combined with a very peculiar expression of his face to make an extraordinary picture. It is difficult to describe this almost unearthly expression. With a certain suppressed ferocity it combined an inflexibility of purpose that sat like an iron mask upon him. His eyes were hungry and eager; they were the living part of him, and they shone luminous from beneath shaggy brows. His forehead was massive, his head of fine proportions, his jaw square and strong, and his thin, high nose showed traces of an ancestry that must have made a mark in some corner of the world at some time in history. He was prematurely old; this was seen in his gray hair and in the uncommonly deep wrinkles which lined his forehead and the corners of his eyes and of his mouth.

Upon stumbling weakly into the room, faint with the labor of walking and of carrying the iron ball, he looked around eagerly, like a bear driven to his haunches by the hounds. His glance passed so rapidly and unintelligently from one face to another that he could not have had time to form a conception of the persons present, until his swift eyes encountered the face of the warden. Instantly they flashed; he craned his neck forward; his lips opened and became blue; the wrinkles deepened about his mouth and eyes; his form grew rigid, and his breathing stopped. This sinister and terrible attitude—all the more so because he was wholly unconscious of it—was disturbed only when the chairman sharply commanded, "Take that seat."

The convict started as though he had been struck, and turned his eyes upon the chairman. He drew a deep inspiration, which wheezed and rattled as it passed into his chest. An expression of excruciating pain swept over his face. He dropped the ball, which struck the floor with a loud sound, and his long bony fingers tore at the striped shirt over his breast. A groan escaped him, and he would have sunk to the floor had not the guard caught him and held him upright. In a moment it was over, and then, collapsing with exhaustion, he sank into the chair. There he sat, conscious and intelligent, but slouching, disorganized, and indifferent.

The chairman turned sharply to the guard.

"Why did you manacle this man," he demanded, "when he is evidently so weak, and when none of the others were manacled?"

"Why, sir," stammered the guard, "surely you know who this man is: he is the most dangerous and desperate—"

"We know all about that. Remove his manacles."

The guard obeyed. The chairman turned to the convict, and in a kindly manner said, "Do you know who we are?"

The convict got himself together a little and looked steadily at the chairman. "No," he replied after a pause. His manner was direct, and his voice was deep, though hoarse.

"We are the State Prison Directors. We have heard of your case, and we want you to tell us the whole truth about it."

The convict's mind worked slowly, and it was some time before he could comprehend the explanation and request. When he had accomplished that task he said, very slowly, "I suppose you want me to make a complaint, sir."

"Yes—if you have any to make."

The convict was getting himself in hand. He straightened, and gazed at the chairman with a peculiar intensity. Then firmly and clearly he answered, "I've no complaint to make."

The two men sat looking at each other in silence, and as they looked a bridge of human sympathy was slowly reared between them. The

chairman rose, passed around an intervening table, went up to the convict, and laid a hand on his gaunt shoulder. There was a tenderness in his voice that few men had ever heard there.

"I know," said he, "that you are a patient and uncomplaining man, or we should have heard from you long ago. In asking you to make a statement I am merely asking for your help to right a wrong, if a wrong has been done. Leave your own wishes entirely out of consideration, if you prefer. Assume, if you will, that it is not our intention or desire either to give you relief or to make your case harder for you. There are fifteen hundred human beings in this prison, and they are under the absolute control of one man. If a serious wrong is practiced upon one, it may be upon others. I ask you in the name of common humanity, and as one man of another, to put us in the way of working justice in this prison. If you have the instincts of a man within you, you will comply with my request. Speak out, therefore, like a man, and have no fear of anything."

The convict was touched and stung. He looked up steadily into the chairman's face, and firmly said, "There is nothing in this world that I fear." Then he hung his head, and presently he raised it and added, "I will tell you all about it."

At that moment he shifted his position so as to bring the beam of light perpendicularly across his face and chest, and it seemed to split him in

twain. He saw it, and feasted his gaze upon it as it lay upon his breast. After a time he thus proceeded, speaking very slowly, and in a strangely monotonous voice:

"I was sent up for twenty years for killing a man. I hadn't been a criminal: I killed him without thinking, for he had robbed me and wronged me. I came here thirteen years ago. I had trouble at first—it galled me to be a convict; but I got over that, because the warden that was here then understood me and was kind to me, and he made me one of the best men in the prison. I don't say this to make you think I'm complaining about the present warden, or that he didn't treat me kindly: I can take care of myself with him. I am not making any complaint. I ask no man's favor, and I fear no man's power."

"That is all right. Proceed."

"After the warden had made a good man out of me I worked faithfully, sir; I did everything they told me to do; I worked willingly and like a slave. It did me good to work, and I worked hard. I never violated any of the rules after I was broken in. And then the law was passed giving credits to the men for good conduct. My term was twenty years, but I did so well that my credits piled up, and after I had been here ten years I could begin to see my way out. There were only about three years left. And, sir, I worked faithfully to make those years good. I knew that if I did anything against the rules I

should lose my credits and have to stay nearly ten years longer. I knew all about that, sir: I never forgot it. I wanted to be a free man again, and I planned to go away somewhere and make the fight all over—to be a man in the world once more."

"We know all about your record in the prison. Proceed."

"Well, it was this way. You know they were doing some heavy work in the quarries and on the grades, and they wanted the strongest men in the prison. There weren't very many: there never are very many strong men in prison. And I was one of 'em that they put on the heavy work, and I did it faithfully. They used to pay the men for extra work—not pay 'em money, but the value of the money in candles, tobacco, extra clothes, and things like that. I loved to work, and I loved to work extra, and so did some of the other men. On Saturdays the men who had done extra work would fall in and go up to the captain of the guard and he would give to each man what was coming to him. He had it all down in a book, and when a man would come up and call for what was due him the captain would give it to him, whatever he wanted that the rules allowed.

"One Saturday I fell in with the others. A good many were ahead of me in the line, and when they got what they wanted they fell into a new line, waiting to be marched to the cells. When my turn in the line came I went up to the

captain and said I would take mine in tobacco. He looked at me pretty sharply, and said, 'How did you get back in that line?' I told him I belonged there—that I had come to get my extra. He looked at his book, and he said, 'You've had your extra: you got tobacco.' And he told me to fall into the new line. I told him I hadn't received any tobacco; I said I hadn't got my extra, and hadn't been up before. He said, 'Don't spoil your record by trying to steal a little tobacco. Fall in.' . . . It hurt me, sir. I hadn't been up; I hadn't got my extra; and I wasn't a thief, and I never had been a thief, and no living man had a right to call me a thief. I said to him, straight, 'I won't fall in till I get my extra, and I'm not a thief, and no man can call me one, and no man can rob me of my just dues.' He turned pale, and said, 'Fall in, there.' I said, 'I won't fall in till I get my dues.'

"With that he raised his hand as a signal, and the two guards behind him covered me with their rifles, and the guard on the west wall, and one on the north wall, and one on the portico in front of the arsenal, all covered me with rifles. The captain turned to a trusty and told him to call the warden. The warden came out, and the captain told him I was trying to run double on my extra, and said I was impudent and insubordinate and refused to fall in. The warden said, 'Drop that and fall in.' I told him I wouldn't fall in. I said I hadn't run double, that I hadn't got my extra,

and that I would stay there till I died before I would be robbed of it. He asked the captain if there wasn't some mistake, and the captain looked at his book and said there was no mistake; he said he remembered me when I came up and got the tobacco and he saw me fall into the new line, but he didn't see me get back in the old line. The warden didn't ask the other men if they saw me get my tobacco and slip back into the old line. He just ordered me to fall in. I told him I would die before I would do that. I said I wanted my just dues and no more, and I asked him to call on the other men in line to prove that I hadn't been up.

"He said, 'That's enough of this.' He sent all the other men to the cells, and left me standing there. Then he told two guards to take me to the cells. They came and took hold of me, and I threw them off as if they were babies. Then more guards came up, and one of them hit me over the head with a club, and I fell. And then, sir"—here the convict's voice fell to a whisper—"and then he told them to take me to the dungeon."

The sharp, steady glitter of the convict's eyes failed, and he hung his head and looked despairingly at the floor.

"Go on," said the chairman.

"They took me to the dungeon, sir. Did you ever see the dungeon?"

"Perhaps; but you may tell us about it."

The cold, steady gleam returned to the con-

vict's eyes, as he fixed them again upon the chairman.

"There are several little rooms in the dungeon. The one they put me in was about five feet by eight. It has steel walls and ceiling, and a granite floor. The only light that comes in passes through a slit in the door. The slit is an inch wide and five inches long. It doesn't give much light because the door is thick. It's about four inches thick, and is made of oak and sheet steel bolted through. The slit runs this way"—making a horizontal motion in the air—"and it is four inches above my eyes when I stand on tiptoe. And I can't look out at the factory wall forty feet away unless I hook my fingers in the slit and pull myself up."

He stopped and regarded his hands, the peculiar appearance of which we all had observed. The ends of the fingers were uncommonly thick; they were red and swollen, and the knuckles were curiously marked with deep white scars.

"Well, sir, there wasn't anything at all in the dungeon, but they gave me a blanket, and they put me on bread and water. That's all they ever give you in the dungeon. They bring the bread and water once a day, and that is at night, because if they come in the daytime it lets in the light.

"The next night after they put me in—it was Sunday night—the warden came with the guard and asked me if I was all right. I said I was.

He said, 'Will you behave yourself and go to work to-morow?' I said, 'No, sir; I won't go to work till I get what is due me.' He shrugged his shoulders, and said, 'Very well: maybe you'll change your mind after you have been in here a week.'

"They kept me there a week. The next Sunday night the warden came and said, 'Are you ready to go to work to-morrow?' and I said, 'No; I will not go to work till I get what is due me.' He called me hard names. I said it was a man's duty to demand his rights, and that a man who would stand to be treated like a dog was no man at all."

The chairman interrupted. "Did you not reflect," he asked, "that these officers would not have stooped to rob you?—that it was through some mistake they withheld your tobacco, and that in any event you had a choice of two things to lose—one a plug of tobacco, and the other seven years of freedom?"

"But they angered me and hurt me, sir, by calling me a thief, and they threw me in the dungeon like a beast. . . . I was standing for my rights, and my rights were my manhood; and that is something a man can carry sound to the grave, whether he's bond or free, weak or powerful, rich or poor."

"Well, after you refused to go to work what did the warden do?"

The convict, although tremendous excitement must have surged and boiled within him,

slowly, deliberately, and weakly came to his feet. He placed his right foot on the chair, and rested his right elbow on the raised knee. The index finger of his right hand, pointing to the chairman and moving slightly to lend emphasis to his narrative, was the only thing that modified the rigid immobility of his figure. Without a single change in the pitch or modulation of his voice, never hurrying, but speaking with the slow and dreary monotony with which he had begun, he nevertheless—partly by reason of these evidences of his incredible self-control—made a formidable picture as he proceeded:

"When I told him that, sir, he said he'd take me to the ladder and see if he couldn't make me change my mind. . . . Yes, sir; he said he'd take me to the ladder." (Here there was a long pause.) "And I a human being, with flesh on my bones and the heart of a man in my body. The other warden hadn't tried to break my spirit on the ladder. He did break it, though; he broke it clear to the bottom of the man inside of me; but he did it with a human word, and not with the dungeon and the ladder. I didn't believe the warden when he said he would take me to the ladder. I couldn't imagine myself alive and put through at the ladder, and I couldn't imagine any human being who could find the heart to put me through. If I had believed him I would have strangled him then and there, and got my body

full of lead while doing it. No, sir; I could not believe it.

"And then he told me to come on. I went with him and the guards. He brought me to the ladder. I had never seen it before. It was a heavy wooden ladder, leaned against the wall, and the bottom was bolted to the floor and the top to the wall. A whip was on the floor." (Again there was a pause.) "The warden told me to strip, sir, and I stripped. . . . And still I didn't believe he would whip me. I thought he just wanted to scare me.

"Then he told me to face up to the ladder. I did so, and reached my arms up to the straps. They strapped my arms to the ladder, and stretched so hard that they pulled me up clear of the floor. Then they strapped my legs to the ladder. The warden then picked up the whip. He said to me, 'I'll give you one more chance: will you go to work to-morrow?' I said, 'No; I won't go to work till I get my dues.' 'Very well,' said he, 'you'll get your dues now.' And then he stepped back and raised the whip. I turned my head and looked at him, and I could see it in his eyes that he meant to strike. . . . And when I saw that, sir, I felt that something inside of me was about to burst."

The convict paused to gather up his strength for the crisis of his story, yet not in the least particular did he change his position, the slight movement of his pointing finger, the steady gleam of

his eye, or the slow monotony of his speech. I had never witnessed any scene so dramatic as this, and yet all was absolutely simple and unintentional. I had been thrilled by the greatest actors, as with matchless skill they gave rein to their genius in tragic situations; but how inconceivably tawdry and cheap such pictures seemed in comparison with this! The claptrap of the music, the lights, the posing, the wry faces, the gasps, lunges, staggerings, rolling eyes—how flimsy and colorless, how mocking and grotesque, they all appeared beside this simple, uncouth, but genuine expression of immeasurable agony!

The stenographer held his pencil poised above the paper, and wrote no more.

"And then the whip came down across my back. The something inside of me twisted hard and then broke wide open, and went pouring all through me like melted iron. It was a hard fight to keep my head clear, but I did it. And then I said to the warden this: 'You've struck me with a whip in cold blood. You've tied me up hand and foot, to whip me like a dog. Well, whip me, then, till you fill your belly with it. You are a coward. You are lower, and meaner, and cowardlier than the lowest and meanest dog that ever yelped when his master kicked him. You were born a coward. Cowards will lie and steal, and you are the same as a thief and liar. No hound would own you for a friend. Whip me hard and long, you coward. Whip me, I say. See how good a coward feels

when he ties up a man and whips him like a dog. Whip me till the last breath quits my body: if you leave me alive I will kill you for this.'

"His face got white. He asked me if I meant that, and I said, 'Yes; before God, I do.' Then he took the whip in both hands and came down with all his might."

"That was nearly two years ago," said the chairman. "You would not kill him now, would you?"

"Yes. I will kill him if I get a chance; and I feel it in me that the chance will come."

"Well, proceed."

"He kept on whipping me. He whipped me with all the strength of both hands. I could feel the broken skin curl upon my back, and when my head got too heavy to hold it straight it hung down, and I saw the blood on my legs and dripping off my toes into a pool of it on the floor. Something was straining and twisting inside of me again. My back didn't hurt much; it was the thing twisting inside of me that hurt. I counted the lashes, and when I counted to twenty-eight the twisting got so hard that it choked me and blinded me; . . . and when I woke up I was in the dungeon again, and the doctor had my back all plastered up, and he was kneeling beside me, feeling my pulse."

The prisoner had finished. He looked around vaguely, as though he wanted to go.

"And you have been in the dungeon ever since?"

"Yes, sir; but I don't mind that."

"How long?"

"Twenty-three months."

"On bread and water?"

"Yes; but that was all I wanted."

"Have you reflected that so long as you harbor a determination to kill the warden you may be kept in the dungeon? You can't live much longer there, and if you die there you will never find the chance you want. If you say you will not kill the warden he may return you to the cells."

"But that would be a lie, sir; I will get a chance to kill him if I go to the cells. I would rather die in the dungeon than be a liar and sneak. If you send me to the cells I will kill him. But I will kill him without that. I will kill him, sir. . . . And he knows it."

Without concealment, but open, deliberate, and implacable, thus in the wrecked frame of a man, so close that we could have touched it, stood Murder—not boastful, but relentless as death.

"Apart from weakness, is your health good?" asked the chairman.

"Oh, it's good enough," wearily answered the convict. "Sometimes the twisting comes on, but when I wake up after it I'm all right."

The prison surgeon, under the chairman's direction, put his ear to the convict's chest, and

then went over and whispered to the chairman.

"I thought so," said that gentleman. "Now, take this man to the hospital. Put him to bed where the sun will shine on him, and give him the most nourishing food."

The convict, giving no heed to this, shambled out with a guard and the surgeon.

The warden sat alone in the prison office with No. 14,208. That he at last should have been brought face to face, and alone, with the man whom he had determined to kill, perplexed the convict. He was not manacled; the door was locked, and the key lay on the table between the two men. Three weeks in the hospital had proved beneficial, but a deathly pallor was still in his face.

"The action of the directors three weeks ago," said the warden, "make my resignation necessary. I have awaited the appointment of my successor, who is now in charge. I leave the prison to-day. In the meantime, I have something to tell you that will interest you. A few days ago a man who was discharged from the prison last year read what the papers have published recently about your case, and he has written to me confessing that it was he who got your tobacco from the captain of the guard. His name is Salter, and he looks very much like you. He had got his own extra, and when he came up again and called

for yours the captain, thinking it was you, gave it to him. There was no intention on the captain's part to rob you."

The convict gasped and leaned forward eagerly.

"Until the receipt of this letter," resumed the warden, "I had opposed the movement which had been started for your pardon; but when this letter came I recommended your pardon, and it has been granted. Besides, you have a serious heart trouble. So you are now discharged from the prison."

The convict stared, and leaned back speechless. His eyes shone with a strange, glassy expression, and his white teeth glistened ominously between his parted lips. Yet a certain painful softness tempered the iron in his face.

"The stage will leave for the station in four hours," continued the warden. "You have made certain threats against my life." The warden paused; then, in a voice that slightly wavered from emotion, he continued: "I shall not permit your intentions in that regard—for I care nothing about them—to prevent me from discharging a duty which, as from one man to another, I owe you. I have treated you with a cruelty the enormity of which I now comprehend. I thought I was right. My fatal mistake was in not understanding your nature. I misconstrued your conduct from the beginning, and in doing so I have laid upon my conscience a burden which will im-

bitter the remaining years of my life. I would do anything in my power, if it were not too late, to atone for the wrong I have done you. If before I sent you to the dungeon, I could have understood the wrong and foreseen its consequences, I would cheerfully have taken my own life rather than raise a hand against you. The lives of us both have been wrecked; but your suffering is in the past—mine is present, and will cease only with my life. For my life is a curse, and I prefer not to keep it."

With that the warden, very pale, but with a clear purpose in his face, took a loaded revolver from a drawer and laid it before the convict.

"Now is your chance," he said, quietly: "no one can hinder you."

The convict gasped and shrank away from the weapon as from a viper.

"Not yet—not yet," he whispered, in agony.

The two men sat and regarded each other without the movement of a muscle.

"Are you afraid to do it?" asked the warden.

A momentary light flashed in the convict's eyes.

"No!" he gasped; "you know I am not. But I can't—not yet—not yet."

The convict, whose ghastly pallor, glassy eyes, and gleaming teeth sat like a mask of death upon his face, staggered to his feet.

"You have done it at last! you have broken my spirit. A human word has done what the dun-

geon and the whip could not do. . . . It twists inside of me now. . . . I could be your slave for that human word." Tears streamed from his eyes. "I can't help crying. I'm only a baby, after all—and I thought I was a man."

He reeled, and the warden caught him and seated him in the chair. He took the convict's hand in his and felt a firm, true pressure there. The convict's eyes rolled vacantly. A spasm of pain caused him to raise his free hand to his chest; his thin, gnarled fingers—made shapeless by long use in the slit of the dungeon door—clutched automatically at his shirt. A faint, hard smile wrinkled his wan face, displaying the gleaming teeth more freely.

"That human word," he whispered—"if you had spoken it long ago, if—but it's all—it's all right—now. I'll go—I'll go to work—to-morrow."

There was a slightly firmer pressure of the hand that held the warden's; then it relaxed. The fingers which clutched the shirt slipped away, and the hand dropped to his side. The weary head sank back and rested on the chair; the strange, hard smile still sat upon the marble face, and a dead man's glassy eyes and gleaming teeth were upturned toward the ceiling.

BROTHER SEBASTIAN'S FRIENDSHIP

BY HAROLD FREDERIC

BROTHER SEBASTIAN'S FRIENDSHIP

BY HAROLD FREDERIC

I WHO tell this story am called Brother Sebastian. This name was given me more than forty years ago, while Louis Philippe was still king. My other name has been buried so long that I have nearly forgotten it. I think that my people are dead. At least I have heard nothing from them in many years. My reputation has always been that of a misanthrope—if not that, then of a dreamer. In the seminary I had no intimates. In the order, for I am a Brother of the Christian Schools, my associates are polite—nothing more. I seem to be outside their social circles, their plans, their enjoyments. True, I am an old man now. But in other years it was the same. All my life I have been in solitude.

To this there is a single exception—one star shining in the blackness. And my career has been so bleak that, although it ended in deeper sadness than I had known before, I look back to the episode with gratitude. The bank of clouds which shut out this sole light of my life quickened its brilliancy before they submerged it.

By permission of the "Utica Observer."

After the terrible siege of '71, when the last German was gone, and our houses had breasted the ordeal of the Commune, I was sent to the South. The Superior thought my cheeks were ominously hollow, and suspected threats of consumption in my cough. So I was to go to the Mediterranean, and try its milder air. I liked the change. Paris, with its gloss of noisy gayety and its substance of sceptical heartlessness, was repugnant to me. Perhaps it was because of this that Brother Sebastian had been mured up in the capital two-thirds of his life. If our surroundings are too congenial we neglect the work set before us. But no matter; to the coast I went.

My new home was a long-established house, spacious, venerable, and dreary. It was on the outskirts of an ancient town, which was of far more importance before our Lord was born than it has ever been since. We had little to do. There were nine brothers, a handful of resident orphans, and some threescore pupils. Ragged, stupid, big-eyed urchins they were, altogether different from the keen Paris boys. For that matter, every feature of my new home was odd. The heat of the summer was scorching in its intensity. The peasants were much more respectful to our cloth, and, as to appearance, looked like figures from Murillo's canvases. The foliage, the wine, the language, the manners of the people—everything was changed. This interested me, and my morbidness vanished. The

Director was delighted with my improved condition. Poor man! he was positive that my cheeks had puffed out perceptibly after the first two months. So the winter came—a mild, wet, muggy winter, wholly unlike my favorite sharp season in the North.

We were killing time in the library one afternoon, the Director and a Swiss Brother sitting by the lamp reading, I standing at one of the tall, narrow windows, drumming on the panes and dreaming. The view was not an inspiring one. There was a long horizontal line of pale yellow sky and another of flat, black land, out of which an occasional poplar raised itself solemnly. The great mass below the stripes was brown; above, gloomy gray. Close under the window two boys were playing in the garden of the house. I recall distinctly that they threw armfuls of wet fallen leaves at each other with a great shouting. While I stood thus, the Brother Servitor, Abonus, came in and whispered to the Director. He always whispered. It was not fraternal, but I did not like this Abonus.

"Send him up here," said the Director. Then I remembered that I had heard the roll of a carriage and the bell ring a few moments before. Abonus came in again. Behind him there was some one else, whose footsteps had the hesitating sound of a stranger's. Then I heard the Director's voice:

"You are from Algiers?"—"I am, Brother."

"Your name?"

"Edouard, Brother."

"Well, tell me more."

"I was under orders to be in Paris in January, Brother. As my health was poor, I received permission to come back to France this autumn. At Marseilles I was instructed to come here. So I am here. I have these papers from the Mother house, and from Etienne, Director, of Algiers."

Something in the voice seemed peculiar to me. I turned and examined the new-comer. He stood behind and to one side of the Director, who was laboriously deciphering some papers through his big horn spectacles. The light was not very bright, but there was enough to see a wonderfully handsome face, framed in dazzling black curls. Perhaps it looked the more beautiful because contrasted with the shaven gray poll and surly features of grim Abonus. But to me it was a dream of St. John the Evangel. The eyes of the face were lowered upon the Director, so I could only guess their brilliancy. The features were those of an extreme youth—round, soft, and delicate. The expression was one of utter fatigue, almost pain. It bore out the statement of ill-health.

The Director had finished his reading. He lifted his head now and surveyed the stranger in turn. Finally, stretching out his fat hand, he said:

"You are welcome, Brother Edouard. I see the letter says you have had no experience except with the youngest children. Brother Photius does that now. We will have you rest for a time. Then we will see about it. Meanwhile I will turn you over to the care of good Abonus, who will give you one of the north rooms."

So the two went out, Abonus shuffling his feet disagreeably. It was strange that he could do nothing to please me.

"Brother Sebastian," said the Director, as the door closed, "it is curious that they should have sent me a tenth man. Why, I lie awake now to invent pretences of work for those I have already. I will give up all show of teaching presently, and give out that I keep a hospital—a retreat for ailing brothers. Still, this Edouard is a pretty boy."

"Very."

"Etienne's letter says he is twenty and a Savoyard. He speaks like a Parisian."

"Very likely he is seminary bred," put in the Swiss.

"Whatever he is, I like his looks," said our Superior. This good man liked every one. His was the placid, easy Alsatian nature, prone to find goodness in all things — even crabbed Abonus. The Director, or, as he was known, Brother Elysee, was a stout, round little man, with a fine face and imperturbable good spirits.

He was adored by all his subordinates. But I fancy he did not advance in favor at Paris very rapidly.

I liked Edouard from the first. The day after he came we were together much, and, when we parted after vespers, I was conscious of a vast respect for this new-comer. He was bright, ready spoken, and almost a man of the world. Compared with my dull career, his short life had been one of positive gayety. He had seen Frederic le Maitre at the Comédie Française. He had been at Court and spoken with the Prince Imperial. He was on terms of intimacy with Monsignori, and had been a protégé of the sainted Darboy. It was a rare pleasure to hear him talk of these things.

Before this, the ceaseless shifting of brothers from one house to another had been indifferent to me. For the hundreds of strangers who came and went in the Paris house on Oudinot Street I cared absolutely nothing. I did not suffer their entrance nor their exit to excite me. This was so much the case that they called me a machine. But with Edouard this was different. I grew to love the boy from the first evening, when, as he left my room, I caught myself saying, "I shall be sorry when he goes." He seemed to be fond of me, too. For that matter most of the brothers petted him, Elysee especially. But I was flattered that he chose me as his particular friend. For the first time my heart had opened.

We were alone one evening after the holidays. It was cold without, but in my room it was warm and bright. The fire crackled merrily, and the candles gave out a mellow and pleasant light. The Director had gone up to Paris, and his mantle had fallen on me. Edouard sat with his feet stretched to the fender, his curly head buried in the great curved back of my invalid chair, the red fire-light reflected on his childish features. I took pleasure in looking at him. He looked at the coals and knit his brows as if in a puzzle. I often fancied that something weightier than the usual troubles of life weighed upon him. At last he spoke, just as I was about to question him:

"Are you afraid to die, Sebastian?"

Not knowing what else to say, I answered, "No, my child."

"I wonder if you enjoy life in community?"

This was still stranger. I could but reply that I had never known any other life; that I was fitted for nothing else.

"But still," persisted he, "would you not like to leave it—to have a career of your own before you die? Do you think this is what a man is created for—to give away his chance to live?"

"Edouard, you are interrogating your own conscience," I answered. "These are questions which you must have answered yourself, before you took your vows. When you answered them, you sealed them."

Perhaps I spoke too harshly, for he colored and drew up his feet. Such shapely little feet they were. I felt ashamed of my crustiness.

"But, Edouard," I added, "your vows are those of the novitiate. You are not yet twenty-eight. You have still the right to ask yourself these things. The world is very fair to men of your age. Do not dream that I was angry with you."

He sat gazing into the fire. His face wore a strange, far-away expression, as he reached forth his hand, in a groping way, and rested it on my knee, clutching the gown nervously. Then he spoke slowly, seeking for words, and keeping his eyes on the flames.

"You have been good to me, Brother Sebastian. Let me ask you: May I tell you something in confidence—something which shall never pass your lips? I mean it."

He had turned and poured those marvelous eyes into mine with irresistible magnetism. Of course I said, "Speak!" and I said it without the slightest hesitation.

"I am not a Christian Brother. I do not belong to your order. I have no claim upon the hospitality of this roof. I am an impostor!"

He ejected these astounding sentences with an energy almost fierce, gripping my knee meanwhile. Then, as suddenly, his grasp relaxed, and he fell to weeping bitterly.

I stared at him solemnly, in silence. My

tongue seemed paralyzed. Confusing thoughts whirled in a maze unbidden through my head. I could say nothing. But a strange impulse prompted me to reach out and take his hot hand in mine. It was piteous to hear him sobbing, his head upon his raised arm, his whole frame quivering with emotion. I had never seen any one weep like that before. So I sat dumb, trying in vain to answer this bewildering self-accusation. At last there came out of the folds of the chair the words, faint and tear-choked:

"You have promised me secrecy, and you will keep your word; but you will hate me."

"Why, no, no, Edouard, not hate you," I answered, scarcely knowing what I said. I did not comprehend it at all. There was nothing more for me to say. Finally, when some power of thought returned, I asked:

"Of all things, my poor boy, why should you choose such a dreary life as this? What possible reason led you to enter the community? What attractions has it for you?"

Edouard turned again from the fire to me. His eyes sparkled. His teeth were tight set.

"Why? Why? I will tell you why, Brother Sebastian. Can you not understand how a poor hunted beast should rejoice to find shelter in such an out-of-the-way place, among such kind men, in the grave of this cloister life? I have not told you half enough. Do you not know in the outside world, in Toulon, or Marseilles, or

that fine Paris of yours, there is a price on my head?—or no, not that, but enemies that are looking for me, searching everywhere, turning every little stone for the poor privilege of making me suffer? And do you know that these enemies wear shakos, and are called gens d'armes? Would you be pleased to learn that it is a prison I escape by coming here? *Now,* will you hate me?"

The boy had risen from his chair. He spoke hurriedly, almost hysterically, his eyes snapping at mine like coals, his curls disheveled, his fingers curved and stiffened like the talons of a hawk. I had never seen such intense earnestness in a human face. Passions like these had never penetrated the convent walls before.

While I sat dumb before him, Edouard left the room. I was conscious of his exit only in a vague way. For hours I sat in my chair beside the grate thinking, or trying to think. You can see readily that I was more than a little perplexed. In the absence of Elysee, I was director. The management of the house, its good fame, its discipline, all rested on my shoulders. And to be confronted by such an abyss as this! I could do absolutely nothing. The boy had tied my tongue by the pledge. Besides, had I been unsworn, I am sure the idea of exposure would never have come to me. It was late before I retired that night. And I recall with terrible distinctness the chaos of brain and faculty which

ushered in a restless sleep almost as dawn was breaking.

I had fancied that Brother Edouard would find life intolerable in community after his revelation to me. He would be chary of meeting me before the brothers; would be constantly tortured by fear of detection. As I saw this prospect of the poor innocent—for it was absurd to think of him as anything else — dreading exposure at each step in his false life, shrinking from observation, biting his tongue at every word—I was greatly moved by pity. Judge my surprise, then, when I saw him the next morning join in the younger brothers' regular walk around the garden, joking and laughing as I had never seen before. On his right was thin, sickly Victor, rest his soul! and on the other pursy, thick-necked John, as merry a soul as Cork ever turned out. And how they laughed, even the frail consumptive! It was a pleasure to see his blue eyes brighten with enjoyment and his warm cheeks blush. Above John's queer, Irish chuckle, I heard Edouard's voice, with its dainty Parisian accent, retailing jokes and leading in the laughter. The tramp was stretched out longer than usual, so pleasant did they find it. At this development I was much amazed.

The same change was noticeable in all that Edouard did. Instead of the apathy with which he had discharged his nominal duties, his baby pupils (for Photius had gone to Peru) now be-

came bewitched with him. He told them droll stories, incited their rivalry in study by instituting prizes for which they struggled monthly, and, in short, metamorphosed his department. The change spread to himself. His cheeks took on a ruddier hue, the sparkle of his black eyes mellowed into a calm and steady radiance. There was no trace of feverish elation which, in solitude, recoiled to the brink of despair. He sang to himself evenings in his dormitory, clearly and with joy. His step was as elastic as that of any schoolboy. I often thought upon this change, and meditated how beautiful an illustration of confession's blessings it furnished. Frequently we were alone, but he never referred again to that memorable evening, even by implication. At first I dreaded to have the door close upon us, feeling that he must perforce seek to take up the thread where he had broken it then. But he talked of other things, and so easily and naturally that I felt embarrassed. For weeks I could not shake off the feeling that, at our next talk, he would broach the subject. But he never did.

Elysee returned, bringing me kind words from the Mother house, and a half-jocular hint that Superior General Philippe had me much in his mind. No doubt there had been a time when the idea of becoming a Director would have stirred my pulses. Surely it was gone now. I asked for nothing but to stay beside Edouard, to watch him, and to be near to lend him a helping hand

when his hour of trouble should come. From that ordeal, which I saw approaching clearly and certainly, I shrank with all my nerves on edge. As the object of my misery grew bright-eyed and strong, I felt myself declining in health. My face grew thin, and I could not eat. I saw before my eyes always this wretched boy singing upon the brow of the abyss. Sometimes I strove not to see his fall—frightful and swift. His secret seemed to harass him no longer. To me it was heavier than lead.

The evening the Brother Director returned, we sat together in the reading-room, the entire community. Elysee had been speaking of the Mother house concerning which Brother Barnabas, an odd little Lorrainer who spoke better German than French, and who regarded Paris with the true provincial awe and veneration, exhibited much curiosity. We had a visitor, a gaunt, self-sufficient old Parisian, who had spent fourteen days in the Mazas prison during the Commune. I will call him Brother Albert, for his true name in religion is very well known.

"I heard a curious story in the Vaugirard house," said the Brother Director, refreshing himself with a pinch of snuff, "which made the more impression upon me that I once knew intimately one of the persons in it. Martin Delette was my schoolmate at Pfalsbourg in the old days. A fine, studious lad he was, too. He took orders and went to the north, where he lived for many

years a quiet country curé. He had a niece, a charming girl who is not now more than twenty or one-and-twenty. She was an orphan, and lived with him, going to a convent to school and returning at vacations. She was not a bad girl, but a trifle wayward and easily led. She gave the Sisters much anxiety. Last spring she barely escaped compromising the house by an escapade with a young *miserable* of the town, named Banin."

"I know your story," said Albert, with an air which hinted that this was a suffcient reason why the rest should not hear it. "Banin is in prison."

Elysee proceeded: "The girl was reprimanded. Next week she disappeared. To one of her companions she had confided a great desire to see Paris. So good Father Delette was summoned, and, after a talk with the Superioress, started post-haste for the capital. He found no signs either of poor Renée or of Banin, who had also disappeared. The Curé was nearly heart-broken. Each day, they told me, added a year to his appearance. He did not cease to importune the police chiefs and to haunt the public places for a glimpse of his niece's face. But the summer came, and no Renée. The Curé began to cough and grow weak. But one day in August the Director, good Prosper, called him down to the reception-room to see a visitor.

"'There is news for you,'" he whispered,

pressing poor Martin's hand. In the room he found—"

"In the room he found—" broke in Albert, impertinently, but with a quiet tone of authority which cowed good Elysee, "a shabby man, looking like a poorly fed waiter. This person rose and said, 'I am a detective; do you know Banin —young man, tall, blond, squints, broken tooth upper jaw, hat back on his head, much talk, hails from Rheims?'

" 'Ah,' said Delette, 'I have not seen him, but I know him too well.'

"The detective pointed with his thumb over his left shoulder. 'He is in jail. He is good for twenty years. I did it myself. My name is So-and-so. Good job. Procurator said you were interested—some woman in the case, parishioner of yours, eh?'

" 'My niece,' gasped the Curé.

" 'O ho! does you credit; pretty girl, curly head, good manners. Well, she's off. Good trick, too. She was the decoy. Banin stood in the shadow with club. She brought gentleman into alley, friend did work. That's Banin's story. Perhaps a lie. You have a brother in Algiers? Thought so. Girl went out there once? So I was told. Probably there now. African officers say not; but they're a sleepy lot. If I was a criminal I'd go to Algiers. Good hiding. The detective went. Delette stood where he was in silence. I went to him, and helped carry him

upstairs. We put him in his bed. He died there."

Brother Albert stopped. He had told the story, dialogue and all, like a machine. We did not doubt its correctness. The memory of Albert had passed into a proverb years before.

Brother Albert raised his eyes again, and added, as if he had not paused, "He was ashamed to hold his head up. He might well be."

A strange, excited voice rose from the other end of the room. I looked and saw that it was Edouard who spoke. He had half arisen from his chair and scowled at Albert, throwing out his words with the tremulous haste of a young man first addressing an audience:

"Why should he be ashamed? Was he not a good man? Was the blame of his bad niece's acts his? From the story, she was well used and had no excuse. It is he who is to be pitied, not blamed!"

The Brother Director smiled benignly at the young enthusiast. "Brother Edouard is right," he said. "Poor Martin was to be compassioned. None the less, my heart is touched for the girl. In Banin's trial it appeared that he maltreated her, and forced her to do what she did by blows. They were really married. Her neighbors gave Renée a name for gentleness and a good heart. Poor thing!"

"And she never was found?" asked Abonus, eagerly. He spoke very rarely. He looked now

at me as he spoke, and there was a strange, ungodly glitter in his eyes which made me shudder involuntarily.

"Never," replied the Director, "although there is a reward, 5,000 francs, offered for her recovery. Miserable child, who can tell what depths of suffering she may be in this moment?"

"It would be remarkable if she should be found now, after all this time," said Abonus, sharply. His wicked, squinting old eyes were still fastened upon me. This time, as by a flash of eternal knowledge, I read their meaning, and felt the ground slipping from under me.

I shall never forget the night that followed. I made no pretence of going to bed. Edouard's little dormitory was in another part of the house. I went once to see him, but dared not knock, since Abonus was stirring about just across the hall, in his own den. I scratched on a piece of paper "Fly!" in the dark, and pushed it under the door. Then I returned to walk my chamber, chafing like a wild beast. Ah, that night, that night!

With the first cock crow in the village below, long before the bell, I left my room. I wanted air to breathe. I passed Abonus on the broad stairway. He strode up with unwonted vigor, bearing a heavy caldron of water as if it had been straw. His gown was tumbled and dusty; his greasy *rabat* hung awry about his neck. I had it in my head to speak with him, but could not. So

the early hours, with devotions which I went through in a dream, wore on in horrible suspense, and breakfast came.

We sat at the long table, five on a side, the Director—looking red-eyed and weary from the evening's unaccustomed dissipation — sitting at the head. Below us stood Brother Albert, reading from Tertullian in a dry, monotonous chant. I recall, as I write, how I found a certain comfort in those splendid, sonorous Latin sentences, though I was conscious of not comprehending a word. I dreaded the moment they should end. Edouard sat beside me. We had not exchanged a word during the morning. How could I speak? What should I say? I was in a nervous flutter, like unto those who watch the final pinioning of a criminal whose guillotine is awaiting him. I could not keep my eyes from the fair face beside me, with its delicately cut profile, made all the more cameo-like by its pallid whiteness. The lips were tightly compressed. I could see askant that the tiny nostrils were quivering with excitement. All else was impassive on Edouard's face. We two sat waiting for the axe to fall.

It is as distinct as a nightmare to me. Abonus came in with his great server laden with victuals. He stumbled as he approached. He too was excited. He drew near, and stood behind me. I seemed to feel his breath penetrate my skull; and yet I was forced to answer a whispered question of Brother John's with a smooth face. I saw

Edouard suddenly reach for the milk glass in front of his plate, and hand it back to Abonus with the disdain of a duchess. He said, in a sharp, peremptory tone:

"Take it away and cleanse it. No one but a dirty monk would place such a glass on the table."

Albert ceased his reading. Abonus did not touch the glass. He shuffled hastily to the sideboard and deposited his burden. Then he came back with the same eager movement. He placed his fists on his hips, like a fish-woman, and hissed, in a voice choking with concentrated rage:

"No one but a woman would complain of it!"

The brothers stared at each other and the two speakers in mute surprise. But they saw nothing in the words beyond a personal wrangle—though even that was such a novelty as to arrest instant attention. I busied myself with my plate. The Director assumed his harshest tone, and asked the cause of the altercation. Abonus leaned over and whispered something in his ear. I remember next a room full of confusion, a babel of conflicting voices, and a whirling glimpse of uniforms. Then I fainted.

When I revived I was in my own room, stretched upon my pallet. I looked around in a dazed way and saw the Brother Director and a young gendarme by the closed door. Something black and irregular in the outline of the bed at my side attracted my eyes. I saw that it was

Edouard's head buried in the drapery. As in a dream I laid my numb hand upon those crisp curls. I was an old man, she was a weak, wretched girl. She raised her face at my touch, and burned in my brain a vision of stricken agony, of horrible soul-pain, which we liken, for want of a better simile, to the anguish in the eyes of a dying doe. Her lips moved; she said something, I know not what. Then she went, and I was left alone with Elysee. His words—broken, stumbling words—I remember:

"She asked to see you, Sebastian, my friend. I could not refuse. Her papers were forged. She did come from Algiers, where her uncle is a Capuchin. I do not ask, I do not wish to know, how much you know of this. Before my Redeemer, I feel nothing but pity for the poor lamb. Lie still, my friend; try to sleep. We are both older men than we were yesterday."

There is little else to tell. Only twice have reflections of this episode in my old life reached me in the seclusion of a missionary post at the foot of the Andes. I learned a few weeks ago that the wretched Abonus had bought a sailor's café on the Toulon wharves with his five thousand francs. And I know also that the heart of the Marshal-President was touched by the sad story of Renée, and that she left the prison La Salpetrière to lay herself in penitence at the foot of Mother Church. This is the story of my friendship.

A GOOD-FOR-NOTHING

BY HJALMAR HJORTH BOYESEN

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I

RALPH GRIM was born a gentleman. He had the misfortune of coming into the world some ten years later than might reasonably have been expected. Colonel Grim and his lady had celebrated twelve anniversaries of their wedding-day, and had given up all hopes of ever having a son and heir, when this late comer startled them by his unexpected appearance. The only previous addition to the family had been a daughter, and she was then ten summers old.

Ralph was a very feeble child, and could only with great difficulty be persuaded to retain his hold of the slender thread which bound him to existence. He was rubbed with whiskey, and wrapped in cotton, and given mare's milk to drink, and God knows what not, and the Colonel swore a round oath of paternal delight when at last the infant stopped gasping in that distressing way and began to breathe like other human beings. The mother, who, in spite of her anxiety for the child's life, had found time to plot for

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him a career of future magnificence, now suddenly set him apart for literature, because that was the easiest road to fame, and disposed of him in marriage to one of the most distinguished families of the land. She cautiously suggested this to her husband when he came to take his seat at her bedside; but to her utter astonishment she found that he had been indulging a similar train of thought, and had already destined the infant prodigy for the army. She, however, could not give up her predilection for literature, and the Colonel, who could not bear to be contradicted in his own house, as he used to say, was getting every minute louder and more flushed, when, happily, the doctor's arrival interrupted the dispute.

As Ralph grew up from infancy to childhood, he began to give decided promise of future distinction. He was fond of sitting down in a corner and sucking his thumb, which his mother interpreted as the sign of that brooding disposition peculiar to poets and men of lofty genius. At the age of five, he had become sole master in the house. He slapped his sister Hilda in the face, or pulled her hair, when she hesitated to obey him, tyrannized over his nurse, and sternly refused to go to bed in spite of his mother's entreaties. On such occasions, the Colonel would hide his face behind his newspaper, and chuckle with delight; it was evident that nature had intended his son for a great military commander.

As soon as Ralph himself was old enough to have any thoughts about his future destiny, he made up his mind that he would like to be a pirate. A few months later, having contracted an immoderate taste for candy, he contented himself with the comparatively humble position of a baker; but when he had read "Robinson Crusoe" he manifested a strong desire to go to sea in the hope of being wrecked on some desolate island. The parents spent long evenings gravely discussing these indications of uncommon genius, and each interpreted them in his or her own way.

"He is not like any other child I ever knew," said the mother.

"To be sure," responded the father, earnestly. "He is a most extraordinary child. I was a very remarkable child too, even if I do say it myself; but, as far as I remember, I never aspired to being wrecked on an uninhabited island."

The Colonel probably spoke the truth; but he forgot to take into account that he had never read "Robinson Crusoe."

Of Ralph's school-days there is but little to report, for, to tell the truth, he did not fancy going to school, as the discipline annoyed him. The day after his having entered the gymnasium, which was to prepare him for the Military Academy, the principal saw him waiting at the gate after his class had been dismissed. He approached him, and asked why he did not go home with the rest.

"I am waiting for the servant to carry my books," was the boy's answer.

"Give me your books," said the teacher.

Ralph reluctantly obeyed. That day the Colonel was not a little surprised to see his son marching up the street, and every now and then glancing behind him with a look of discomfort at the principal, who was following quietly in his train, carrying a parcel of school-books. Colonel Grim and his wife, divining the teacher's intention, agreed that it was a great outrage, but they did not mention the matter to Ralph. Henceforth, however, the boy refused to be accompanied by his servant. A week later he was impudent to the teacher of gymnastics, who whipped him in return. The Colonel's rage knew no bounds; he rode in great haste to the gymnasium, reviled the teacher for presuming to chastise *his* son, and committed the boy to the care of a private tutor.

At the age of sixteen, Ralph went to the capital with the intention of entering the Military Academy. He was a tall, handsome youth, slender of stature, and carried himself as erect as a candle. He had a light, clear complexion of almost feminine delicacy; blond, curly hair, which he always kept carefully brushed; a low forehead, and a straight, finely modeled nose. There was an expression of extreme sensitiveness about the nostrils, and a look of indolence in the dark-blue eyes. But the *ensemble* of his features was

pleasing, his dress irreproachable, and his manners bore no trace of the awkward self-consciousness peculiar to his age. Immediately on his arrival in the capital he hired a suite of rooms in the aristocratic part of the city, and furnished them rather expensively, but in excellent taste. From a bosom friend, whom he met by accident in the restaurant's pavilion in the park, he learned that a pair of antlers, a stuffed eagle, or falcon, and a couple of swords, were indispensable to a well-appointed apartment. He accordingly bought these articles at a curiosity shop. During the first weeks of his residence in the city he made some feeble efforts to perfect himself in mathematics, in which he suspected he was somewhat deficient. But when the same officious friend laughed at him, and called him "green," he determined to trust to fortune, and henceforth devoted himself the more assiduously to the French ballet, where he had already made some interesting acquaintances.

The time for the examination came; the French ballet did not prove a good preparation; Ralph failed. It quite shook him for the time, and he felt humiliated. He had not the courage to tell his father; so he lingered on from day to day, sat vacantly gazing out of his window, and tried vainly to interest himself in the busy bustle down on the street. It provoked him that everybody else should be so light-hearted, when he was, or at least fancied himself, in trouble. The parlor

grew intolerable; he sought refuge in his bedroom. There he sat one evening (it was the third day after the examination), and stared out upon the gray stone walls which on all sides inclosed the narrow courtyard. The round stupid face of the moon stood tranquilly dozing like a great Limburger cheese suspended under the sky.

Ralph, at least, could think of a no more fitting simile. But the bright-eyed young girl in the window hard by sent a longing look up to the same moon, and thought of her distant home on the fjords, where the glaciers stood like hoary giants, and caught the yellow moonbeams on their glittering shields of snow. She had been reading "Ivanhoe" all the afternoon, until the twilight had overtaken her quite unaware, and now she suddenly remembered that she had forgotten to write her German exercise. She lifted her face and saw a pair of sad, vacant eyes gazing at her from the next window in the angle of the court. She was a little startled at first, but in the next moment she thought of her German exercise and took heart.

"Do you know German?" she said; then immediately repented that she had said it.

"I do," was the answer.

She took up her apron and began to twist it with an air of embarrassment.

"I didn't mean anything," she whispered, at last. "I only wanted to know."

"You are very kind."

That answer roused her; he was evidently making sport of her.

"Well, then, if you do, you may write my exercise for me. I have marked the place in the book."

And she flung her book over to the window, and he caught it on the edge of the sill, just as it was falling.

"You are a very strange girl," he remarked, turning over the leaves of the book, although it was too dark to read. "How old are you?"

"I shall be fourteen six weeks before Christmas," answered she, frankly.

"Then I excuse you."

"No, indeed," cried she, vehemently. "You needn't excuse me at all. If you don't want to write my exercise, you may send the book back again. I am very sorry I spoke to you, and I shall never do it again."

"But you will not get the book back again without the exercise," replied he, quietly. "Good-night."

The girl stood long looking after him, hoping that he would return. Then, with a great burst of repentance, she hid her face in her lap, and began to cry.

"Oh, dear, I didn't mean to be rude," she sobbed. "But it was Ivanhoe and Rebecca who upset me."

The next morning she was up before daylight, and waited for two long hours in great suspense

before the curtain of his window was raised. He greeted her politely; threw a hasty glance around the court to see if he was observed, and then tossed her book dexterously over into her hands.

"I have pinned the written exercise to the fly-leaf," he said. "You will probably have time to copy it before breakfast."

"I am ever so much obliged to you," she managed to stammer.

He looked so tall and handsome, and grown-up, and her remorse stuck in her throat, and threatened to choke her. She had taken him for a boy as he sat there in his window the evening before.

"By the way, what is your name?" he asked, carelessly, as he turned to go.

"Bertha."

"Well, my dear Bertha, I am happy to have made your acquaintance."

And he again made her a polite bow, and entered his parlor.

"How provokingly familiar he is," thought she; "but no one can deny that he is handsome."

The bright roguish face of the young girl haunted Ralph during the whole next week. He had been in love at least ten times before, of course; but, like most boys, with young ladies far older than himself. He found himself frequently glancing over to her window in the hope of catching another glimpse of her face; but the curtain was always drawn down, and Bertha remained invisible. During the second week, how-

ever, she relented, and they had many a pleasant chat together. He now volunteered to write all her exercises, and she made no objections. He learned that she was the daughter of a well-to-do peasant in the sea-districts of Norway (and it gave him quite a shock to hear it), and that she was going to school in the city, and boarded with an old lady who kept a *pension* in the house adjoining the one in which he lived.

One day in the autumn Ralph was surprised by the sudden arrival of his father, and the fact of his failure in the examination could no longer be kept a secret. The old Colonel flared up at once when Ralph made his confession; the large veins upon his forehead swelled; he grew coppery-red in his face, and stormed up and down the floor, until his son became seriously alarmed; but, to his great relief, he was soon made aware that his father's wrath was not turned against him personally, but against the officials of the Military Academy who had rejected him. The Colonel took it as insult to his own good name and irreproachable standing as an officer; he promptly refused any other explanation, and vainly racked his brain to remember if any youthful folly of his could possibly have made him enemies among the teachers of the Academy. He at last felt satisfied that it was envy of his own greatness and rapid advancement which had induced the rascals to take vengeance on his son. Ralph reluctantly followed his father back to

the country town where the latter was stationed, and the fair-haired Bertha vanished from his horizon. His mother's wish now prevailed, and he began, in his own easy way, to prepare himself for the University. He had little taste for Cicero, and still less for Virgil, but with the use of a "pony" he soon gained sufficient knowledge of these authors to be able to talk in a sort of patronizing way about them, to the great delight of his fond parents. He took quite a fancy, however, to the ode in Horace ending with the lines:

Dulce ridentem,
Dulce loquentem,
Lalagen amabo.

And in his thought he substituted for Lalage the fair-haired Bertha, quite regardless of the requirements of the metre.

To make a long story short, three years later Ralph returned to the capital, and, after having worn out several tutors, actually succeeded in entering the University.

The first year of college life is a happy time to every young man, and Ralph enjoyed its processions, its parliamentary gatherings, and its leisure, as well as the rest. He was certainly not the man to be sentimental over the loss of a young girl whom, moreover, he had only known for a few weeks. Nevertheless, he thought of her at odd times, but not enough to disturb his pleasure. The standing of his family, his own handsome appearance, and his immaculate linen

opened to him the best houses of the city, and he became a great favorite in society. At lectures he was seldom seen, but more frequently in the theatres, where he used to come in during the middle of the first act, take his station in front of the orchestra box, and eye, through his lorgnette, by turns, the actresses and the ladies of the parquet.

II

Two months passed, and then came the great annual ball which the students give at the opening of the second semester. Ralph was a man of importance that evening; first, because he belonged to a great family; secondly, because he was the handsomest man of his year. He wore a large golden star on his breast (for his fellow-students had made him a Knight of the Golden Boar) and a badge of colored ribbons in his buttonhole.

The ball was a brilliant affair, and everybody was in excellent spirits, especially the ladies. Ralph danced incessantly, twirled his soft mustache, and uttered amiable platitudes. It was toward midnight, just as the company was moving out to supper, that he caught the glance of a pair of dark-blue eyes, which suddenly drove the blood to his cheeks and hastened the beating of his heart. But when he looked once more the dark-blue eyes were gone, and his unruly heart went on hammering against his side. He laid

his hand on his breast and glanced furtively at his fair neighbor, but she looked happy and unconcerned, for the flavor of the ice cream was delicious. It seemed an endless meal, but, when it was done, Ralph rose, led his partner back to the ballroom, and hastily excused himself. His glance wandered round the wide hall, seeking the well-remembered eyes once more, and, at length, finding them in a remote corner, half hid behind a moving wall of promenaders. In another moment he was at Bertha's side.

"You must have been purposely hiding yourself, Miss Bertha," said he, when the usual greetings were exchanged. "I have not caught a glimpse of you all this evening, until a few moments ago."

"But I have seen you all the while," answered the girl, frankly. "I knew you at once as I entered the hall."

"If I had but known that you were here," resumed Ralph, as it were invisibly expanding with an agreeable sense of dignity, "I assure you you would have been the very first one I should have sought."

She raised her large grave eyes to his, as if questioning his sincerity; but she made no answer.

"Good gracious!" thought Ralph. "She takes things terribly in earnest."

"You look so serious, Miss Bertha," said he, after a moment's pause. "I remember you as a

bright-eyed, flaxen-haired little girl, who threw her German exercise-book to me across the yard, and whose merry laughter still rings pleasantly in my memory. I confess I don't find it quite easy to identify this grave young lady with my merry friend of three years ago."

"In other words, you are disappointed at not finding me the same as I used to be."

"No, not exactly that; but—"

Ralph paused and looked puzzled. There was something in the earnestness of her manner which made a facetious compliment seem grossly inappropriate, and in the moment no other escape suggested itself.

"But what?" demanded Bertha, mercilessly.

"Have you ever lost an old friend?" asked he, abruptly.

"Yes; how so?"

"Then," answered he, while his features lighted up with a happy inspiration—"then you will appreciate my situation. I fondly cherished my old picture of you in my memory. Now I have lost it, and I can not help regretting the loss. I do not mean, however, to imply that this new acquaintance—this second edition of yourself, so to speak—will prove less interesting."

She again sent him a grave, questioning look, and began to gaze intently upon the stone in her bracelet.

"I suppose you will laugh at me," began she, while a sudden blush flitted over her counte-

nance. "But this is my first ball, and I feel as if I had rushed into a whirlpool, from which I have, since the first rash plunge was made, been vainly trying to escape. I feel so dreadfully forlorn. I hardly know anybody here except my cousin, who invited me, and I hardly think I know him either."

"Well, since you are irredeemably committed," replied Ralph, as the music, after some prefatory flourishes, broke into the delicious rhythm of a Strauss waltz, "then it is no use struggling against fate. Come, let us make the plunge together. Misery loves company."

He offered her his arm, and she rose, somewhat hesitatingly, and followed.

"I am afraid," she whispered, as they fell into line with the procession that was moving down the long hall, "that you have asked me to dance merely because I said I felt forlorn. If that is the case, I should prefer to be led back to my seat."

"What a base imputation!" cried Ralph.

There was something so charmingly *naïve* in this self-depreciation — something so altogether novel in his experience, and, he could not help adding, just a little bit countrified. His spirits rose; he began to relish keenly his position as an experienced man of the world, and, in the agreeable glow of patronage and conscious superiority, chatted with hearty *abandon* with his little rustic beauty.

"If your dancing is as perfect as your German exercises were," said she, laughing, as they swung out upon the floor, "then I promise myself a good deal of pleasure from our meeting."

"Never fear," answered he, quickly reversing his step, and whirling with many a capricious turn away among the thronging couples.

When Ralph drove home in his carriage toward morning he briefly summed up his impressions of Bertha in the following adjectives: intelligent, delightfully unsophisticated, a little bit verdant, but devilish pretty.

Some weeks later Colonel Grim received an appointment at the fortress of Aggershuus, and immediately took up his residence in the capital. He saw that his son cut a fine figure in the highest circles of society, and expressed his gratification in the most emphatic terms. If he had known, however, that Ralph was in the habit of visiting, with alarming regularity, at the house of a plebeian merchant in a somewhat obscure street, he would, no doubt, have been more chary of his praise. But the Colonel suspected nothing, and it was well for the peace of the family that he did not. It may have been cowardice in Ralph that he never mentioned Bertha's name to his family or to his aristocratic acquaintances; for, to be candid, he himself felt ashamed of the power she exerted over him, and by turns pitied and ridiculed himself

for pursuing so inglorious a conquest. Nevertheless it wounded his egotism that she never showed any surprise at seeing him, that she received him with with a certain frank unceremoniousness, which, however, was very becoming to her; that she invariably went on with her work heedless of his presence, and in everything treated him as if she had been his equal. She persisted in talking with him in a half sisterly fashion about his studies and his future career, warned him with great solicitude against some of his reprobate friends, of whose merry adventures he had told her; and if he ventured to compliment her on her beauty or her accomplishments, she would look up gravely from her sewing, or answer him in a way which seemed to banish the idea of love-making into the land of the impossible. He was constantly tormented by the suspicion that she secretly disapproved of him, and that from a mere moral interest in his welfare she was conscientiously laboring to make him a better man. Day after day he parted from her feeling humiliated, faint-hearted, and secretly indignant both at himself and her, and day after day he returned only to renew the same experience. At last it became too intolerable, he could endure it no longer. Let it make or break, certainty, at all risks, was at least preferable to this sickening suspense. That he loved her, he could no longer doubt; let his parents foam and fret as much as they pleased; for

once he was going to stand on his own legs. And in the end, he thought, they would have to yield, for they had no son but him.

Bertha was going to return to her home on the sea-coast in a week. Ralph stood in the little low-ceiled parlor, as she imagined, to bid her good-by. They had been speaking of her father, her brothers, and the farm, and she had expressed the wish that if he ever should come to that part of the country he might pay them a visit. Her words had kindled a vague hope in his breast, but in their very frankness and friendly regard there was something which slew the hope they had begotten. He held her hand in his, and her large confiding eyes shone with an emotion which was beautiful, but was yet not love.

"If you were but a peasant born like myself," said she, in a voice which sounded almost tender, "then I should like to talk to you as I would to my own brother; but—"

"No, not brother, Bertha," cried he, with sudden vehemence; "I love you better than I ever loved any earthly being, and if you knew how firmly this love has clutched at the roots of my heart, you would perhaps—you would at least not look so reproachfully at me."

She dropped his hand, and stood for a moment silent.

"I am sorry that it should have come to this, Mr. Grim," said she, visibly struggling for calm-

ness. "And I am perhaps more to blame than you."

"Blame," muttered he, "why are you to blame?"

"Because I do not love you; although I sometimes feared that this might come. But then again I persuaded myself that it could not be so."

He took a step toward the door, laid his hand on the knob, and gazed down before him.

"Bertha," began he, slowly, raising his head, "you have always disapproved of me, you have despised me in your heart, but you thought you would be doing a good work if you succeeded in making a man of me."

"You use strong language," answered she, hesitatingly; "but there is truth in what you say."

Again there was a long pause, in which the ticking of the old parlor clock grew louder and louder.

"Then," he broke out at last, "tell me before we part if I can do nothing to gain—I will not say your love—but only your regard? What would you do if you were in my place?"

"My advice you will hardly heed, and I do not even know that it would be well if you did. But if I were a man in your position, I should break with my whole past, start out into the world where nobody knew me, and where I should be dependent only upon my own strength, and there I would conquer a place for myself, if it were

only for the satisfaction of knowing that I was really a man. Here cushions are sewed under your arms, a hundred invisible threads bind you to a life of idleness and vanity, everybody is ready to carry you on his hands, the road is smoothed for you, every stone carefully moved out of your path, and you will probably go to your grave without having ever harbored one earnest thought, without having done one manly deed."

Ralph stood transfixed, gazing at her with open mouth; he felt a kind of stupid fright, as if some one had suddenly seized him by the shoulders and shaken him violently. He tried vainly to remove his eyes from Bertha. She held him as by a powerful spell. He saw that her face was lighted with an altogether new beauty; he noticed the deep glow upon her cheek, the brilliancy of her eye, the slight quiver of her lip. But he saw all this as one sees things in a half-trance, without attempting to account for them; the door between his soul and his senses was closed.

"I know that I have been bold in speaking to you in this way," she said at last, seating herself in a chair at the window. "But it was yourself who asked me. And I have felt all the time that I should have to tell you this before we parted."

"And," answered he, making a strong effort to appear calm, "if I follow your advice, will you allow me to see you once more before you go?"

"I shall remain here another week, and shall,

during that time, always be ready to receive you."

"Thank you. Good-by."

"Good-by."

Ralph carefully avoided all the fashionable thoroughfares; he felt degraded before himself, and he had an idea that every man could read his humiliation in his countenance. Now he walked on quickly, striking the sidewalk with his heels; now, again, he fell into an uneasy, reckless saunter, according as the changing moods inspired defiance of his sentence, or a qualified surrender. And, as he walked on, the bitterness grew within him, and he piteously reviled himself for having allowed himself to be made a fool of by "that little country goose," when he was well aware that there were hundreds of women of the best families of the land who would feel honored at receiving his attentions. But this sort of reasoning he knew to be both weak and contemptible, and his better self soon rose in loud rebellion.

"After all," he muttered, "in the main thing she was right. I am a miserable good-for-nothing, a hothouse plant, a poor stick, and if I were a woman myself, I don't think I should waste my affections on a man of that calibre."

Then he unconsciously fell to analyzing Bertha's character, wondering vaguely that a person who moved so timidly in social life, appearing so diffident, from an ever-present fear

of blundering against the established forms of etiquette, could judge so quickly, and with such a merciless certainty, whenever a moral question, a question of right and wrong, was at issue. And, pursuing the same train of thought, he contrasted her with himself, who moved in the highest spheres of society as in his native element, heedless of moral scruples, and conscious of no loftier motive for his actions than the immediate pleasure of the moment.

As Ralph turned the corner of a street, he heard himself hailed from the other sidewalk by a chorus of merry voices.

"Ah, my dear Baroness," cried a young man, springing across the street and grasping Ralph's hand (all his student friends called him the Baroness), in the name of this illustrious company, allow me to salute you. But why the deuce —what is the matter with you? If you have the *Katzenjammer,** soda-water is the thing. Come along—it's my treat!"

The students instantly thronged around Ralph, who stood distractedly swinging his cane and smiling idiotically.

"I am not quite well," said he; "leave me alone."

"No, to be sure, you don't look well," cried a jolly youth, against whom Bertha had frequently warned him; "but a glass of sherry will soon re-

* *Katzenjammer* is the sensation a man has the morning after a carousal.

store you. It would be highly immoral to leave you in this condition without taking care of you."

Ralph again vainly tried to remonstrate; but the end was, that he reluctantly followed.

He had always been a conspicuous figure in the student world; but that night he astonished his friends by his eloquence, his reckless humor, and his capacity for drinking. He made a speech for "Woman," which bristled with wit, cynicism, and sarcastic epigrams. One young man, named Vinter, who was engaged, undertook to protest against his sweeping condemnation, and declared that Ralph, who was a universal favorite among the ladies, ought to be the last to revile them.

"If," he went on, "the Baroness should propose to six well-known ladies here in this city whom I could mention, I would wager six Johannisbergers, and an equal amount of champagne, that every one of them would accept him."

The others loudly applauded this proposal, and Ralph accepted the wager. The letters were written on the spot, and immediately despatched. Toward morning, the merry carousal broke up, and Ralph was conducted in triumph to his home.

III

Two days later, Ralph again knocked on Bertha's door. He looked paler than usual, almost haggard; his immaculate linen was a little crumpled, and he carried no cane; his lips were

tightly compressed, and his face wore an air of desperate resolution.

"It is done," he said, as he seated himself opposite her. "I am going."

"Going!" cried she, startled at his unusual appearance. "How, where?"

"To America. I sail to-night. I have followed your advice, you see. I have cut off the last bridge behind me."

"But, Ralph," she exclaimed, in a voice of alarm. "Something dreadful must have happened. Tell me quick; I must know it."

"No; nothing dreadful," muttered he, smiling bitterly. "I have made a little scandal, that is all. My father told me to-day to go to the devil, if I chose, and my mother gave me five hundred dollars to help me along on the way. If you wish to know, here is the explanation."

And he pulled from his pocket six perfumed and carefully folded notes, and threw them into her lap.

"Do you wish me to read them?" she asked, with growing surprise.

"Certainly. Why not?"

She hastily opened one note after the other, and read.

"But, Ralph," she cried, springing up from her seat, while her eyes flamed with indignation, "what does this mean? What have you done?"

"I didn't think it needed any explanation," replied he, with feigned indifference. "I proposed

to them all, and, you see, they all accepted me. I received all these letters to-day. I only wished to know whether the whole world regarded me as such a worthless scamp as you told me I was."

She did not answer, but sat mutely staring at him, fiercely crumpling a rose-colored note in her hand. He began to feel uncomfortable under her gaze, and threw himself about uneasily in his chair.

"Well," said he, at length, rising, "I suppose there is nothing more. Good-by."

"One moment, Mr. Grim," demanded she, sternly. "Since I have already said so much, and you have obligingly revealed to me a new side of your character, I claim the right to correct the opinion I expressed of you at our last meeting."

"I am all attention."

"I did think, Mr. Grim," began she, breathing hard, and steadying herself against the table at which she stood, "that you were a very selfish man—an embodiment of selfishness, absolute and supreme, but I did not believe that you were wicked."

"And what convinced you that I was selfish, if I may ask?"

"What convinced me?" repeated she, in a tone of inexpressible contempt. "When did you ever act from any generous regard for others? What good did you ever do to anybody?"

"You might ask, with equal justice, what good I ever did to myself."

"In a certain sense, yes; because to gratify a mere momentary wish is hardly doing one's self good."

"Then I have, at all events, followed the Biblical precept, and treated my neighbor very much as I treat myself."

"I did think," continued Bertha, without heeding the remark, "that you were at bottom kind-hearted, but too hopelessly well-bred ever to commit an act of any decided complexion, either good or bad. Now I see that I have misjudged you, and that you are capable of outraging the most sacred feelings of a woman's heart in mere wantonness, or for the sake of satisfying a base curiosity, which never could have entered the mind of an upright and generous man."

The hard, benumbed look in Ralph's face thawed in the warmth of her presence, and her words, though stern, touched a secret spring in his heart. He made two or three vain attempts to speak, then suddenly broke down, and cried:

"Bertha, Bertha, even if you scorn me, have patience with me, and listen."

And he told her, in rapid, broken sentences, how his love for her had grown from day to day, until he could no longer master it; and how, in an unguarded moment, when his pride rose in fierce conflict against his love, he had done this reckless deed of which he was now heartily ashamed. The fervor of his words touched her,

for she felt that they were sincere. Large mute tears trembled in her eyelashes as she sat gazing tenderly at him, and in the depth of her soul the wish awoke that she might have been able to return this great and strong love of his; for she felt that in this love lay the germ of a new, of a stronger and better man. She noticed, with a half-regretful pleasure, his handsome figure, his delicately shaped hands, and the noble cast of his features; an overwhelming pity for him rose within her, and she began to reproach herself for having spoken so harshly, and, as she now thought, so unjustly. Perhaps he read in her eyes the unspoken wish. He seized her hand, and his words fell with a warm and alluring cadence upon her ear.

"I shall not see you for a long time to come, Bertha," said he, "but if at the end of five or six years your hand is still free, and I return another man—a man to whom you could safely intrust your happiness—would you then listen to what I may have to say to you? For I promise, by all that we both hold sacred—"

"No, no," interrupted she, hastily. "Promise nothing. It would be unjust to yourself, and perhaps also to me; for a sacred promise is a terrible thing, Ralph. Let us both remain free; and, if you return and still love me, then come, and I shall receive you and listen to you. And even if you have outgrown your love, which is, indeed, more probable, come still to visit me wherever I

may be, and we shall meet as friends and rejoice in the meeting."

"You know best," he murmured. "Let it be as you have said."

He arose, took her face between his hands, gazed long and tenderly into her eyes, pressed a kiss upon her forehead, and hastened away.

That night Ralph boarded the steamer for Hull, and three weeks later landed in New York.

IV

The first three months of Ralph's sojourn in America were spent in vain attempts to obtain a situation. Day after day he walked down Broadway, calling at various places of business, and night after night he returned to his cheerless room with a faint heart and declining spirits. It was, after all, a more serious thing than he had imagined, to cut the cable which binds one to the land of one's birth. There a hundred subtile influences, the existence of which no one suspects until the moment they are withdrawn, unite to keep one in the straight path of rectitude, or at least of external respectability; and Ralph's life had been all in society; the opinion of his fellowmen had been the one force to which he implicitly deferred, and the conscience by which he had been wont to test his actions had been nothing but the aggregate judgment of his friends. To such a man the isolation and the utter irresponsibility of

a life among strangers was tenfold more dangerous; and Ralph found, to his horror, that his character contained innumerable latent possibilities which the easy-going life in his home probably never would have revealed to him. It often cut him to the quick, when, on entering an office in his daily search for employment, he was met by hostile or suspicious glances, or when, as it occasionally happened, the door was slammed in his face, as if he were a vagabond or an impostor. Then the wolf was often roused within him, and he felt a momentary wild desire to become what the people here evidently believed him to be. Many a night he sauntered irresolutely about the gambling places in obscure streets, and the glare of light, the rude shouts and clamors in the same moment repelled and attracted him. If he went to the devil, who would care? His father had himself pointed out the way to him; and nobody could blame him if he followed the advice. But then again a memory emerged from that chamber of his soul which still he held sacred; and Bertha's deep-blue eyes gazed upon him with their earnest look of tender warning and regret.

When the summer was half gone, Ralph had gained many a hard victory over himself, and learned many a useful lesson; and at length he swallowed his pride, divested himself of his fine clothes, and accepted a position as assistant gardener at a villa on the Hudson. And as he stood perspiring with a spade in his hand, and a cheap

broad-brimmed straw hat on his head, he often took a grim pleasure in picturing to himself how his aristocratic friends at home would receive him if he should introduce himself to them in this new costume.

"After all, it was only my position they cared for," he reflected, bitterly; "without my father's name what would I be to them?"

Then, again, there was a certain satisfaction in knowing that, for his present situation, humble as it was, he was indebted to nobody but himself; and the thought that Bertha's eyes, if they could have seen him now, would have dwelt upon him with pleasure and approbation, went far to console him for his aching back, his sunburned face, and his swollen and blistered hands.

One day, as Ralph was raking the gravel-walks in the garden, his employer's daughter, a young lady of seventeen, came out and spoke to him. His culture and refinement of manner struck her with wonder, and she asked him to tell her his history; but then he suddenly grew very grave, and she forbore pressing him. From that time she attached a kind of romantic interest to him, and finally induced her father to obtain him a situation that would be more to his taste. And, before winter came, Ralph saw the dawn of a new future glimmering before him. He had wrestled bravely with fate, and had once more gained a victory. He began the career in which success and distinction awaited him as proofreader on a

newspaper in the city. He had fortunately been familiar with the English language before he left home, and by the strength of his will he conquered all difficulties. At the end of two years he became attached to the editorial staff; new ambitious hopes, hitherto foreign to his mind, awoke within him; and with joyous tumult of heart he saw life opening its wide vistas before him, and he labored on manfully to repair the losses of the past, and to prepare himself for greater usefulness in times to come. He felt in himself a stronger and fuller manhood, as if the great arteries of the vast universal world-life pulsed in his own being. The drowsy, indolent existence at home appeared like a dull remote dream from which he had awaked, and he blessed the destiny which, by its very sternness, had mercifully saved him; he blessed her, too, who, from the very want of love for him, had, perhaps, made him worthier of love.

The years flew rapidly. Society had flung its doors open to him, and what was more, he had found some warm friends, in whose houses he could come and go at pleasure. He enjoyed keenly the privilege of daily association with high-minded and refined women; their eager activity of intellect stimulated him, their exquisite ethereal grace and their delicately chiseled beauty satisfied his æsthetic cravings, and the responsive vivacity of their nature prepared him ever new surprises. He felt a strange fascination

in the presence of these women, and the conviction grew upon him that their type of womanhood was superior to any he had hitherto known. And by way of refuting his own argument, he would draw from his pocketbook the photograph of Bertha, which had a secret compartment there all to itself, and, gazing tenderly at it, would eagerly defend her against the disparaging reflections which the involuntary comparison had provoked. And still, how could he help seeing that her features, though well molded, lacked animation; that her eye, with its deep, trustful glance, was not brilliant, and that the calm earnestness of her face, when compared with the bright, intellectual beauty of his present friends, appeared pale and simple, like a violet in a bouquet of vividly colored roses? It gave him a quick pang, when, at times, he was forced to admit this; nevertheless, it was the truth.

After six years of residence in America, Ralph had gained a very high reputation as a journalist of rare culture and ability, and in 1867 he was sent to the World's Exhibition in Paris, as correspondent of the paper on which he had during all these years been employed. What wonder, then, that he started for Europe a few weeks before his presence was needed in the imperial city, and that he steered his course directly toward the fjord valley where Bertha had her home? It was she who had bidden him Godspeed when he fled

from the land of his birth, and she, too, should receive his first greeting on his return.

V

The sun had fortified itself behind a citadel of flaming clouds, and the upper forest region shone with a strange ethereal glow, while the lower plains were wrapped in shadow; but the shadow itself had a strong suffusion of color. The mountain peaks rose cold and blue in the distance.

Ralph, having inquired his way of the boatman who had landed him at the pier, walked rapidly along the beach, with a small valise in his hand, and a light summer overcoat flung over his shoulder. Many half-thoughts grazed his mind, and ere the first had taken shape, the second and the third came and chased it away. And still they all in some fashion had reference to Bertha; for in a misty, abstract way, she filled his whole mind; but for some indefinable reason, he was afraid to give free rein to the sentiment which lurked in the remoter corners of his soul.

Onward he hastened, while his heart throbbed with the quickening tempo of mingled expectation and fear. Now and then one of those chill gusts of air, which seem to be careering about aimlessly in the atmosphere during early summer, would strike into his face, and recall him to a keener self-consciousness.

Ralph concluded, from his increasing agitation,

that he must be very near Bertha's home. He stopped and looked around him. He saw a large maple at the roadside, some thirty steps from where he was standing, and the girl who was sitting under it, resting her head in her hand and gazing out over the sea, he recognized in an instant to be Bertha. He sprang up on the road, not crossing, however, her line of vision, and approached her noiselessly from behind.

"Bertha," he whispered.

She gave a little joyous cry, sprang up, and made a gesture as if to throw herself in his arms; then suddenly checked herself, blushed crimson, and moved a step backward.

"You came so suddenly," she murmured.

"But, Bertha," cried he (and the full bass of his voice rang through her very soul), "have I gone into exile and waited these many years for so cold a welcome?"

"You have changed so much, Ralph," she answered, with that old grave smile which he knew so well, and stretched out both her hands toward him. "And I have thought of you so much since you went away, and blamed myself because I had judged you so harshly, and wondered that you could listen to me so patiently, and never bear me any malice for what I said."

"If you had said a word less," declared Ralph, seating himself at her side on the greensward, "or if you had varnished it over with politeness, then you would probably have failed to produce any

effect and I should not have been burdened with that heavy debt of gratitude which I now owe you. I was a pretty thick-skinned animal in those days, Bertha. You said the right word at the right moment; you gave me a bold and a good piece of advice, which my own ingenuity would never have suggested to me. I will not thank you, because, in so grave a case as this, spoken thanks sound like a mere mockery. Whatever I am, Bertha, and whatever I may hope to be, I owe it all to that hour."

She listened with rapture to the manly assurance of his voice; her eyes dwelt with unspeakable joy upon his strong, bronzed features, his full thick blond beard, and the vigorous proportions of his frame. Many and many a time during his absence had she wondered how he would look if he ever came back, and with that minute conscientiousness which, as it were, pervaded her whole character, she had held herself responsible before God for his fate, prayed for him, and trembled lest evil powers should gain the ascendency over his soul.

On their way to the house they talked together of many things, but in a guarded, cautious fashion, and without the cheerful abandonment of former years. They both, as it were, groped their way carefully in each other's minds, and each vaguely felt that there was something in the other's thought which it was not well to touch unbidden. Bertha saw that all her fears for him

had been groundless, and his very appearance lifted the whole weight of responsibility from her breast; and still, did she rejoice at her deliverance from her burden? Ah, no; in this moment she knew that that which she had foolishly cherished as the best and noblest part of herself had been but a selfish need of her own heart. She feared that she had only taken that interest in him which one feels in a thing of one's own making, and now, when she saw that he had risen quite above her; that he was free and strong, and could have no more need of her, she had, instead of generous pleasure at his success, but a painful sense of emptiness, as if something very dear had been taken from her.

Ralph, too, was loth to analyze the impression his old love made upon him. His feelings were of so complex a nature, he was anxious to keep his more magnanimous impulses active, and he strove hard to convince himself that she was still the same to him as she had been before they had ever parted. But, alas! though the heart be warm and generous, the eye is a merciless critic. And the man who had moved on the wide arena of the world, whose mind had housed the large thoughts of this century, and expanded with its invigorating breath—was he to blame because he had unconsciously outgrown his old provincial self, and could no more judge by its standards?

Bertha's father was a peasant, but he had, by his lumber trade, acquired what in Norway was

called a very handsome fortune. He received his guest with dignified reserve, and Ralph thought he detected in his eyes a lurking look of distrust. "I know your errand," that look seemed to say, "but you had better give it up at once. It will be of no use for you to try."

And after supper, as Ralph and Bertha sat talking confidingly with each other at the window, he sent his daughter a quick, sharp glance, and then, without ceremony, commanded her to go to bed. Ralph's heart gave a great thump within him; not because he feared the old man, but because his words, as well as his glances, revealed to him the sad history of these long, patient years. He doubted no longer that the love which he had once so ardently desired was his at last; and he made a silent vow that, come what might, he would remain faithful.

As he came down to breakfast the next morning, he found Bertha sitting at the window, engaged in hemming what appeared to be a rough kitchen towel. She bent eagerly over her work, and only a vivid flush upon her cheek told him that she had noticed his coming. He took a chair, seated himself opposite her, and bade her "good-morning." She raised her head, and showed him a sweet, troubled countenance, which the early sunlight illumined with a high spiritual beauty. It reminded him forcibly of those pale, sweet-faced saints of Fra Angelico, with whom the frail flesh seems ever on the point of yielding to the

ardent aspirations of the spirit. And still even in this moment he could not prevent his eyes from observing that one side of her forefinger was rough from sewing, and that the whiteness of her arm, which the loose sleeves displayed, contrasted strongly with the browned and sunburned complexion of her hands.

After breakfast they again walked together on the beach, and Ralph, having once formed his resolution, now talked freely of the New World —of his sphere of activity there; of his friends and of his plans for the future; and she listened to him with a mild, perplexed look in her eyes, as if trying vainly to follow the flight of his thoughts. And he wondered, with secret dismay, whether she was still the same strong, brave-hearted girl whom he had once accounted almost bold; whether the life in this narrow valley, amid a hundred petty and depressing cares, had not cramped her spiritual growth, and narrowed the sphere of her thought. Or was she still the same, and was it only he who had changed? At last he gave utterance to his wonder, and she answered him in those grave, earnest tones which seemed in themselves to be half a refutation of his doubts.

"It was easy for me to give you daring advice then, Ralph," she said. "Like most school-girls, I thought that life was a great and glorious thing, and that happiness was a fruit which hung within reach of every hand. Now I have lived for six

years trying single-handed to relieve the want and suffering of the needy people with whom I come in contact, and their squalor and wretchedness have sickened me, and, what is still worse, I feel that all I can do is as a drop in the ocean, and, after all, amounts to nothing. I know I am no longer the same reckless girl who, with the very best intention, sent you wandering through the wide world; and I thank God that it proved to be for your good, although the whole now appears quite incredible to me. My thoughts have moved so long within the narrow circle of these mountains that they have lost their youthful elasticity, and can no more rise above them."

Ralph detected, in the midst of her despondency, a spark of her former fire, and grew eloquent in his endeavors to persuade her that she was unjust to herself, and that there was but a wider sphere of life needed to develop all the latent powers of her rich nature.

At the dinner-table, her father again sat eying his guest with that same cold look of distrust and suspicion. And when the meal was at an end, he rose abruptly and called his daughter into another room. Presently Ralph heard his angry voice resounding through the house, interrupted now and then by a woman's sobs, and a subdued, passionate pleading. When Bertha again entered the room, her eyes were very red, and he saw that she had been weeping. She threw a shawl over her shoulders, beckoned to him with

her hand, and he arose and followed her. She led the way silently until they reached a thick copse of birch and alder near the strand. She dropped down upon a bench between two trees, and he took his seat at her side.

"Ralph," began she, with a visible effort, "I hardly know what to say to you; but there is something which I must tell you—my father wishes you to leave us at once."

"And *you,* Bertha?"

"Well—yes—I wish it too."

She saw the painful shock which her words gave him, and she strove hard to speak. Her lips trembled, her eyes became suffused with tears, which grew and grew, but never fell; she could not utter a word.

"Well, Bertha," answered he, with a little quiver in his voice, "if you, too, wish me to go, I shall not tarry. Good-by."

He rose quickly, and, with averted face, held out his hand to her; but as she made no motion to grasp the hand, he began distractedly to button his coat, and moved slowly away.

"Ralph."

He turned sharply, and, before he knew it, she lay sobbing upon his breast.

"Ralph," she murmured, while the tears almost choked her words, "I could not have you leave me thus. It is hard enough—it is hard enough—"

"What is hard, beloved?"

She raised her head abruptly, and turned

upon him a gaze full of hope and doubt, and sweet perplexity.

"Ah, no, you do not love me," she whispered, sadly.

"Why should I come to seek you, after these many years, dearest, if I did not wish to make you my wife before God and men? Why should I—"

"Ah, yes, I know," she interrupted him with a fresh fit of weeping, "you are too good and honest to wish to throw me away, now when you have seen how my soul has hungered for the sight of you these many years, how even now I cling to you with a despairing clutch. But you can not disguise yourself, Ralph, and I saw from the first moment that you loved me no more."

"Do not be such an unreasonable child," he remonstrated, feebly. "I do not love you with the wild, irrational passion of former years; but I have the tenderest regard for you, and my heart warms at the sight of your sweet face, and I shall do all in my power to make you as happy as any man can make you who—"

"Who does not love me," she finished.

A sudden shudder seemed to shake her whole frame, and she drew herself more tightly up to him.

"Ah, no," she continued, after a while, sinking back upon her seat. "It is a hopeless thing to compel a reluctant heart. I will accept no sacrifice from you. You owe me nothing, for you

have acted toward me honestly and uprightly, and I shall be a stronger or—at least—a better woman for what you gave me—and—for what you could not give me, even though you would."

"But, Bertha," exclaimed he, looking mournfully at her, "it is not true when you say that I owe you nothing. Six years ago, when first I wooed you, you could not return my love, and you sent me out into the world, and even refused to accept any pledge or promise for the future."

"And you returned," she responded, "a man, such as my hope had pictured you; but, while I had almost been standing still, you had outgrown me and outgrown your old self, and, with your old self, outgrown its love for me, for your love was not of your new self, but of the old. Alas! it is a sad tale, but it is true."

She spoke gravely now, and with a steadier voice, but her eyes hung upon his face with an eager look of expectation, as if yearning to detect there some gleam of hope, some contradiction of the dismal truth. He read that look aright and it pierced him like a sharp sword. He made a brave effort to respond to its appeal, but his features seemed hard as stone, and he could only cry out against his destiny, and bewail his misfortune and hers.

Toward evening, Ralph was sitting in an open boat, listening to the measured oar-strokes of the boatmen who were rowing him out to the nearest stopping-place of the steamer. The mountains

lifted their great placid heads up among the sun-bathed clouds, and the fjord opened its cool depths as if to make room for their vast reflections. Ralph felt as if he were floating in the midst of the blue infinite space, and, with the strength which this feeling inspired, he tried to face boldly the thought from which he had but a moment ago shrunk as from something hopelessly sad and perplexing.

And in that hour he looked fearlessly into the gulf which separates the New World from the Old. He had hoped to bridge it; but, alas! it can not be bridged.

THE DAMNED THING

BY AMBROSE BIERCE

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I

BY THE light of a tallow candle, which had been placed on one end of a rough table, a man was reading something written in a book. It was an old account book, greatly worn; and the writing was not, apparently, very legible, for the man sometimes held the page close to the flame of the candle to get a stronger light upon it. The shadow of the book would then throw into obscurity a half of the room, darkening a number of faces and figures; for besides the reader, eight other men were present. Seven of them sat against the rough log walls, silent and motionless, and, the room being small, not very far from the table. By extending an arm any one of them could have touched the eighth man, who lay on the table, face upward, partly covered by a sheet, his arms at his sides. He was dead.

The man with the book was not reading aloud, and no one spoke; all seemed to be waiting for something to occur; the dead man only was without expectation. From the blank darkness outside came in, through the aperture that served for

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a window, all the ever unfamiliar noises of night in the wilderness—the long, nameless note of a distant coyote; the stilly pulsing thrill of tireless insects in trees; strange cries of night birds, so different from those of the birds of day; the drone of great blundering beetles, and all that mysterious chorus of small sounds that seem always to have been but half heard when they have suddenly ceased, as if conscious of an indiscretion. But nothing of all this was noted in that company; its members were not overmuch addicted to idle interest in matters of no practical importance; that was obvious in every line of their rugged faces—obvious even in the dim light of the single candle. They were evidently men of the vicinity—farmers and woodmen.

The person reading was a trifle different; one would have said of him that he was of the world, worldly, albeit there was that in his attire which attested a certain fellowship with the organisms of his environment. His coat would hardly have passed muster in San Francisco: his footgear was not of urban origin, and the hat that lay by him on the floor (he was the only one uncovered) was such that if one had considered it as an article of mere personal adornment he would have missed its meaning. In countenance the man was rather prepossessing, with just a hint of sternness; though that he may have assumed or cultivated, as appropriate to one in authority. For he was a coroner. It was by virtue of his

office that he had possession of the book in which he was reading; it had been found among the dead man's effects—in his cabin, where the inquest was now taking place.

When the coroner had finished reading he put the book into his breast pocket. At that moment the door was pushed open and a young man entered. He, clearly, was not of mountain birth and breeding: he was clad as those who dwell in cities. His clothing was dusty, however, as from travel. He had, in fact, been riding hard to attend the inquest.

The coroner nodded; no one else greeted him.

"We have waited for you," said the coroner. "It is necessary to have done with this business to-night."

The young man smiled. "I am sorry to have kept you," he said. "I went away, not to evade your summons, but to post to my newspaper an account of what I suppose I am called back to relate."

The coroner smiled.

"The account that you posted to your newspaper," he said, "differs probably from that which you will give here under oath."

"That," replied the other, rather hotly and with a visible flush, "is as you choose. I used manifold paper and have a copy of what I sent. It was not written as news, for it is incredible, but as fiction. It may go as a part of my testimony under oath."

"But you say it is incredible."

'That is nothing to you, sir, if I also swear that it is true."

The coroner was apparently not greatly affected by the young man's manifest resentment. He was silent for some moments, his eyes upon the floor. The men about the sides of the cabin talked in whispers, but seldom withdrew their gaze from the face of the corpse. Presently the coroner lifted his eyes and said: "We will resume the inquest."

The men removed their hats. The witness was sworn.

"What is your name?" the coroner asked.

"William Harker."

"Age?"

"Twenty-seven."

"You knew the deceased, Hugh Morgan?"

"Yes."

"You were with him when he died?"

"Near him."

"How did that happen—your presence, I mean?"

"I was visiting him at this place to shoot and fish. A part of my purpose, however, was to study him, and his odd, solitary way of life. He seemed a good model for a character in fiction. I sometimes write stories."

"I sometimes read them."

"Thank you."

"Stories in general—not yours."

Some of the jurors laughed. Against a sombre background humor shows high lights. Soldiers in the intervals of battle laugh easily, and a jest in the death chamber conquers by surprise.

"Relate the circumstances of this man's death," said the coroner. "You may use any notes or memoranda that you please."

The witness understood. Pulling a manuscript from his breast pocket he held it near the candle, and turning the leaves until he found the passage that he wanted, began to read.

II

" . . . The sun had hardly risen when we left the house. We were looking for quail, each with a shotgun, but we had only one dog. Morgan said that our best ground was beyond a certain ridge that he pointed out, and we crossed it by a trail through the *chaparral.* On the other side was comparatively level ground, thickly covered with wild oats. As we emerged from the *chaparral,* Morgan was but a few yards in advance. Suddenly, we heard, at a little distance to our right, and partly in front, a noise as of some animal thrashing about in the bushes, which we could see were violently agitated.

" 'We've started a deer,' I said. 'I wish we had brought a rifle.'

"Morgan, who had stopped and was intently

watching the agitated *chaparral,* said nothing, but had cocked both barrels of his gun, and was holding it in readiness to aim. I thought him a trifle excited, which surprised me, for he had a reputation for exceptional coolness, even in moments of sudden and imminent peril.

"'O, come!' I said. 'You are not going to fill up a deer with quail-shot, are you?'

"Still he did not reply; but, catching a sight of his face as he turned it slightly toward me, I was struck by the pallor of it. Then I understood that we had serious business on hand, and my first conjecture was that we had 'jumped' a grizzly. I advanced to Morgan's side, cocking my piece as I moved.

"The bushes were now quiet, and the sounds had ceased, but Morgan was as attentive to the place as before.

"'What is it? What the devil is it?' I asked.

"'That Damned Thing!' he replied, without turning his head. His voice was husky and unnatural. He trembled visibly.

"I was about to speak further, when I observed the wild oats near the place of the disturbance moving in the most inexplicable way. I can hardly describe it. It seemed as if stirred by a streak of wind, which not only bent it, but pressed it down—crushed it so that it did not rise, and this movement was slowly prolonging itself directly toward us.

"Nothing that I had ever seen had affected me so strangely as this unfamiliar and unaccountable phenomenon, yet I am unable to recall any sense of fear. I remember—and tell it here because, singularly enough, I recollected it then—that once, in looking carelessly out of an open window, I momentarily mistook a small tree close at hand for one of a group of larger trees at a little distance away. It looked the same size as the others, but, being more distinctly and sharply defined in mass and detail, seemed out of harmony with them. It was a mere falsification of the law of aerial perspective, but it startled, almost terrified me. We so rely upon the orderly operation of familiar natural laws that any seeming suspension of them is noted as a menace to our safety, a warning of unthinkable calamity. So now the apparently causeless movement of the herbage, and the slow, undeviating approach of the line of disturbance were distinctly disquieting. My companion appeared actually frightened, and I could hardly credit my senses when I saw him suddenly throw his gun to his shoulders and fire both barrels at the agitated grass! Before the smoke of the discharge had cleared away I heard a loud savage cry—a scream like that of a wild animal—and, flinging his gun upon the ground, Morgan sprang away and ran swiftly from the spot. At the same instant I was thrown violently to the ground by the impact of something unseen in the smoke—some soft, heavy sub-

stance that seemed thrown against me with great force.

"Before I could get upon my feet and recover my gun, which seemed to have been struck from my hands, I heard Morgan crying out as if in mortal agony, and mingling with his cries were such hoarse savage sounds as one hears from fighting dogs. Inexpressibly terrified, I struggled to my feet and looked in the direction of Morgan's retreat; and may heaven in mercy spare me from another sight like that! At a distance of less than thirty yards was my friend, down upon one knee, his head thrown back at a frightful angle, hatless, his long hair in disorder and his whole body in violent movement from side to side, backward and forward. His right arm was lifted and seemed to lack the hand—at least, I could see none. The other arm was invisible. At times, as my memory now reports this extraordinary scene, I could discern but a part of his body; it was as if he had been partly blotted out—I can not otherwise express it—then a shifting of his position would bring it all into view again.

"All this must have occurred within a few seconds, yet in that time Morgan assumed all the postures of a determined wrestler vanquished by superior weight and strength. I saw nothing but him, and him not always distinctly. During the entire incident his shouts and curses were heard, as if through an enveloping uproar of such

sounds of rage and fury as I had never heard from the throat of man or brute!

"For a moment only I stood irresolute, then, throwing down my gun, I ran forward to my friend's assistance. I had a vague belief that he was suffering from a fit or some form of convulsion. Before I could reach his side he was down and quiet. All sounds had ceased, but, with a feeling of such terror as even these awful events had not inspired, I now saw the same mysterious movement of the wild oats prolonging itself from the trampled area about the prostrate man toward the edge of a wood. It was only when it had reached the wood that I was able to withdraw my eyes and look at my companion. He was dead."

III

The coroner rose from his seat and stood beside the dead man. Lifting an edge of the sheet he pulled it away, exposing the entire body, altogether naked and showing in the candle light a clay-like yellow. It had, however, broad maculations of bluish-black, obviously caused by extravasated blood from contusions. The chest and sides looked as if they had been beaten with a bludgeon. There were dreadful lacerations; the skin was torn in strips and shreds.

The coroner moved round to the end of the table and undid a silk handkerchief, which had

been passed under the chin and knotted on the top of the head. When the handkerchief was drawn away it exposed what had been the throat. Some of the jurors who had risen to get a better view repented their curiosity, and turned away their faces. Witness Harker went to the open window and leaned out across the sill, faint and sick. Dropping the handkerchief upon the dead man's neck, the coroner stepped to an angle of the room, and from a pile of clothing produced one garment after another, each of which he held up a moment for inspection. All were torn, and stiff with blood. The jurors did not make a closer inspection. They seemed rather uninterested. They had, in truth, seen all this before; the only thing that was new to them being Harker's testimony.

"Gentlemen," the coroner said, "we have no more evidence, I think. Your duty has been already explained to you; if there is nothing you wish to ask you may go outside and consider your verdict."

The foreman rose—a tall, bearded man of sixty, coarsely clad.

"I should like to ask one question, Mr. Coroner," he said. "What asylum did this yer last witness escape from?"

"Mr. Harker," said the coroner, gravely and tranquilly, "from what asylum did you last escape?"

Harker flushed crimson again, but said noth-

ing, and the seven jurors rose and solemnly filed out of the cabin.

If you have done insulting me, sir," said Harker, as soon as he and the officer were left alone with the dead man, "I suppose I am at liberty to go?"

"Yes."

Harker started to leave, but paused, with his hand on the door latch. The habit of his profession was strong in him—stronger than his sense of personal dignity. He turned about and said:

"The book that you have there—I recognize it as Morgan's diary. You seemed greatly interested in it; you read in it while I was testifying. May I see it? The public would like—"

"The book will cut no figure in this matter," replied the official, slipping it into his coat pocket; "all the entries in it were made before the writer's death."

As Harker passed out of the house the jury reentered and stood about the table on which the now covered corpse showed under the sheet with sharp definition. The foreman seated himself near the candle, produced from his breast pocket a pencil and scrap of paper, and wrote rather laboriously the following verdict, which with various degrees of effort all signed:

"We, the jury, do find that the remains come to their death at the hands of a mountain lion, but some of us thinks, all the same, they had fits."

IV

In the diary of the late Hugh Morgan are certain interesting entries having, possibly, a scientific value as suggestions. At the inquest upon his body the book was not put in evidence; possibly the coroner thought it not worth while to confuse the jury. The date of the first of the entries mentioned can not be ascertained; the upper part of the leaf is torn away; the part of the entry remaining is as follows:

" . . . would run in a half circle, keeping his head turned always toward the centre and again he would stand still, barking furiously. At last he ran away into the brush as fast as he could go. I thought at first that he had gone mad, but on returning to the house found no other alteration in his manner than what was obviously due to fear of punishment.

"Can a dog see with his nose? Do odors impress some olfactory centre with images of the thing emitting them? . . .

"Sept. 2.—Looking at the stars last night as they rose above the crest of the ridge east of the house, I observed them successively disappear—from left to right. Each was eclipsed but an instant, and only a few at the same time, but along the entire length of the ridge all that were within a degree or two of the crest were blotted out. It was as if something had passed along between me and them; but I could not see it, and the stars

were not thick enough to define its outline. Ugh! I don't like this. . . ."

Several weeks' entries are missing, three leaves being torn from the book.

"Sept. 27.—It has been about here again—I find evidences of its presence every day. I watched again all of last night in the same cover, gun in hand, double-charged with buckshot. In the morning the fresh footprints were there, as before. Yet I would have sworn that I did not sleep—indeed, I hardly sleep at all. It is terrible, insupportable! If these amazing experiences are real I shall go mad; if they are fanciful I am mad already.

"Oct. 3.—I shall not go—it shall not drive me away. No, this is *my* house, *my* land. God hates a coward. . . .

"Oct. 5.—I can stand it no longer; I have invited Harker to pass a few weeks with me—he has a level head. I can judge from his manner if he thinks me mad.

"Oct. 7.—I have the solution of the problem; it came to me last night—suddenly, as by revelation. How simple—how terribly simple!

"There are sounds that we can not hear. At either end of the scale are notes that stir no chord of that imperfect instrument, the human ear. They are too high or too grave. I have observed a flock of blackbirds occupying an entire treetop —the tops of several trees—and all in full song. Suddenly—in a moment—at absolutely the same

instant—all spring into the air and fly away. How? They could not all see one another—whole treetops intervened. At no point could a leader have been visible to all. There must have been a signal of warning or command, high and shrill above the din, but by me unheard. I have observed, too, the same simultaneous flight when all were silent, among not only blackbirds, but other birds—quail, for example, widely separated by bushes—even on opposite sides of a hill.

"It is known to seamen that a school of whales basking or sporting on the surface of the ocean, miles apart, with the convexity of the earth between them, will sometimes dive at the same instant—all gone out of sight in a moment. The signal has been sounded—too grave for the ear of the sailor at the masthead and his comrades on the deck—who nevertheless feel its vibrations in the ship as the stones of a cathedral are stirred by the bass of the organ.

"As with sounds, so with colors. At each end of the solar spectrum the chemist can detect the presence of what are known as 'actinic' rays. They represent colors—integral colors in the composition of light—which we are unable to discern. The human eye is an imperfect instrument; its range is but a few octaves of the real 'chromatic scale.' I am not mad; there are colors that we can not see.

"And, God help me! the Damned Thing is of such a color!"

THE WILD HORSE OF TARTARY

BY CLARA MORRIS

THE WILD HORSE OF TARTARY

BY CLARA MORRIS

BUT there! Just as I start to speak of my third season, I seem to look into a pair of big, mild eyes that say, "Can it be that you mean to pass *me* by? Do you forget that 'twas I who turned the great-sensation scene of a play into a side-splitting farce?"—and I shake my head and answer truthfully, "I can not forget. I shall never forget your work that night in Columbus, when you appeared as the 'fiery untamed steed' (may Heaven forgive you!) in 'Mazeppa'!"

Mr. Robert E. J. Miles—or "All-the-Alphabet Miles," as he was frequently called — was starring at that time in the "horse" drama, doing such plays as "The Cataract of the Ganges," "Mazeppa," "Sixteen-String Jack," etc. "Mazeppa" was the favorite in Columbus, and both the star and the manager regretted that they had billed the other plays in advance, as there would have been more money in "Mazeppa" alone. Mr. Miles carried with him two horses; one, for "The Wild Horse of Tartary," was an exquisitely

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formed, satin-coated creature, who looked wickedly at you from the corner of her blazing eye: who bared her teeth savagely, and struck out with her forefeet, as well as with her hind ones. When she came rearing, plunging, biting, snapping, whirling, and kicking her way on to the stage, the scarlet lining of her dilating nostrils and the foam flying from her mouth made our screams very natural ones, and the women in front used to huddle close together, or even cover their faces.

One creature only did this beautiful vixen love —R. E. J. Miles. She fawned upon him like a dog, and did tricks for him like a dog, but she was a terror to the rest of mankind. It was really a thrilling scene when Mazeppa was bound, his head tailward, his feet maneward, to the back of that maddened beast. She seemed to bite and tear at him, and when set free, she stood straight up for a dreadful moment, in which she really endangered his life; then, with a wild neigh, she tore off up the "runs" as if fiends pursued her, with the man stretched helplessly along her inky back. The curtain used to go up again and again, it was so very effective.

The other horse who traveled with Mr. Miles was an entirely different sort. He would have been described—according to the State where he happened to be—as a piebald, a skewbald, a pinto, or a calico horse. He was very large, mostly of a satiny white color, with big absurdly-

shaped markings of bright bay. He was one of that breed of horses which in livery stables are always known as "Doctor" or "Judge." Benevolence beamed from his large, clear eyes, and he looked so mildly wise one half expected to see him put on spectacles. The boy at the stable said one day, as he fed him, "I wouldn't wonder if this ol' parson of a hoss asked a blessin' on them there oats—I wouldn't!"

I don't know whether Old Bob, as he was called, had any speed or not, but if he had it was useless to him; for alas! he was never allowed to reach the goal under any circumstances. He was always ridden by the villain, and therefore had to be overtaken. Besides that he generally had to carry double, as the desperado usually fled holding the fainting heroine before him, and though Old Bob successfully leaped chasms thus heavily handicapped—for truly he was a mighty jumper—nevertheless he was compelled to accept defeat. Mr. Miles always came rushing up to the rescue on the black horse, when Bob was very lucky, indeed, if he didn't have to roll about and die; and he was a very impatient dead horse, often amusing the audience by lifting his head to see if the curtain was not down, and then dropping dead again, with a sigh the whole house could hear.

Anyway, being continually pushed back into second place, and compelled to listen to the unearned applause bestowed upon the beautiful

black, Old Bob lost all ambition professionally, and he simply became a gourmet and a glutton. He lived to eat. A woman in his eyes was a sort of perambulating storehouse of cake, crackers, apples, sugar, etc.; only his love for children was disinterested. The moment he was loose he went off on a search for children, no matter whose so long as he found some; then down he would go on his knees, and wait to be pulled and patted. His habit of gathering very small people up by their back breadths, and carrying them a little way before dropping them, always filled the air with wild shrieks of laughter. In the theatre he walked sedately about before rehearsal began, and though we knew his attentions were entirely selfish, he was so urbane, so complaisant in his manner of going through us, that we could not resist his advances, and each day and night we packed our pockets and our muffs with such provender as women seldom carry about in their clothes. All our gloves smelled as though we worked at a cider mill.

While the play was going on, Old Bob spent a great part of his time standing on the first of the screened platforms connecting the runs, and as everyone of us had to pass him on our way to dress, he demanded toll of all. Fruits, domestic or foreign, he received with gentle eagerness. Cake, crackers, and sugar—the velvety nose snuffed at them approvingly, and if a girl, believing herself late, tried to pass him swiftly by,

his look of amazement was comical to behold, and in an instant his iron-shod foot was playing a veritable devil's tattoo on the resounding board platform. If that failed to win attention, following her with his eyes, he lifted up his voice in a full-chested "Neigh—hay—hay—*haay!*" that brought her back in a hurry with her toll of sugar. And that piebald hypocrite would scrunch it with such a piteously ravenous air that the girl quite forgot the satirical words her landlady had directed against her recently-acquired sweet tooth.

The dreadful night of disaster came late in the week. I don't recall the name of the play, but in that one piece the beautiful, high-spirited black mare had to carry double up the runs. John Carroll and Miss Lucy Cutler were the riders. Mr. Carroll claimed that he could ride a little, and though he was afraid, he was ashamed to own it. Mr. Miles said in the morning: "Now if you are the least bit timid, Mr. Carroll, say so, and I will fasten the bridle reins to the saddle pommel, and Queen will carry you up of her own accord as true as a die and as safe as a rock; but if you are going to hold the bridle, for God's sake be careful! If it was Old Bob, you could saw him as much as you liked and he would pay no attention, but Queen, who has a tender mouth, is half-mad with excitement at night, and a very slight pressure on the wrong rein will mean a forty or fifty-foot fall for you all!"

Miss Cutler expressed great fear, when Mr. Miles surprisedly said: "Why, you have ridden with me twice this week without a sign of fear?"

"Oh, yes," she answered, "but *you* know what you are doing—*you* are a horseman!"

It was an unfortunate speech, and in face of it Mr. Carroll's vanity would not allow him to admit his anxiety. "He could ride well enough and he would handle the reins himself," he declared.

During the day his fears grew upon him. Foolishly and wickedly he resorted to spirits to try to build up some Dutch courage. Then when the scene came on, half-blind with fear and the liquor—which he was not used to—as he felt the fierce creature beneath him rushing furiously up the steep incline, a sort of madness came upon him. Without rhyme or reason he pulled desperately at the nigh rein, and in the same breath their three bodies were hurling downward like thunderbolts. It was an awful sight! I looked at them as they descended, and for the fraction of a second they seemed to be suspended in the air. They were all upside down. All, without turning or twisting, fell straight as plummets—the horse, the same as the man and woman, had its feet straight in the air. Ugh! the striking. Ugh! never mind details. The curtain was rushed down. Miss Cutler was picked up dazed, stunned, but without a mark. Mr. Carroll crept away unaided amid the confusion, the sor-

row, and the tears, for splendid Queen was doomed. Though Mr. Miles had risked his own life in an awful leap to save her from falling through a trap, he could not save her life, and the almost human groan with which she dropped her lovely head upon her master's shoulders, and his streaming eyes as he tenderly wiped the blood from her velvety nostrils, made even the scene-shifters rub their eyes upon the backs of their hands. While Queen was half-carried to the fire-engine house next door (her stable was too far away), some one went before the curtain and assured the audience that the accident was very slight, and that the lady and gentleman would both appear presently. The audience applauded in a rather doubtful manner, for several ladies had fainted, and the carrying out of a helpless person in a place of amusement always has a depressing effect upon the lookers-on. Meantime Mr. Carroll was getting his wrist bandaged and a cut on his face patched up, while a basket of sawdust was hurriedly procured that certain cruel stains might be concealed. The orchestra played briskly, and the play went on. That's the one thing we can be sure of in this world—that the play will go on. Late that night, beautiful Queen died, with her head resting on her master's knee.

Now "Mazeppa" was billed for the next night, and there were many consultations held in the office and on the stage. "The Wild Horse of

Tartary" was gone. It was impossible to find a new horse in one day. "Change the bill!" said Mr. Miles. "And we have an empty house," answered Mr. Ellsler.

"But what can I do for a horse?" asked Mr. Miles. "Use Old Bob," answered Mr. Ellsler.

"Good Lord!" groaned Bob's master. They argued long, but neither wanted to lose the good house, so the bill was allowed to stand, and "Mazeppa" was performed with Old Bob as "The Wild Horse of Tartary." Think of it—that ingratiating Old Bob, that follower of women and playmate of children! Why, even the great bay blotches on his white old hide made one think of the circus, of paper hoops, and of *training,* rather than of wildness. With the hope of making him at least impatient and restless, he had been deprived of his supper, and the result was a settled gloom, an air of melancholy, that made Mr. Miles swear under his breath every time he looked at him.

The play moved along nicely, the house was large, and seemed pleased. Mazeppa fell into his enemy's hands, the sentence was pronounced, and the order followed, "Bring forth the fiery, untamed steed!"

The women of the audience began to draw close to their escorts. Many of them remembered the biting, kicking entrance of the black, and were frightened beforehand. The orchestra responded with incidental, creepy music, but that

was all. Over in the entrance, Old Bob, surrounded by the four men who were supposed to restrain him, stood quietly. But those who sat in the left box heard "get-ups!" and "go-ons!" and the cluckings of many tongues. The mighty Khan of Tartary (who could not see that entrance) thought he had not been heard, and he roared again, "Bring forth the fiery, untamed steed!" Another pause; the house tittered; then some one hit Old Bob a crack across the rump with a whip, at which he gave a switch of his tail, and gently ambled on to the stage. He stopped of his own accord at the centre, and, lowering his head, stretched out his neck and sniffed at the leader of the orchestra, precisely as a dog sniffs at a stranger. It was deliciously ridiculous. We girls were supposed to scream with fear of the "wild horse," and alas! we were only too obedient; crowding down at the right, clinging together in attitudes of extremest fright, we shrieked and screeched until Old Bob pricked up his ears, and looked so astonished at our conduct that the audience simply rocked back and forth with laughter. And all the time Mazeppa was saying things that did not seem at all like prayers. Finally he gave orders for the men to surround Bob, which they did, and then a sharp little spike was used—that was to make him dance about pretty lively. It pricked him on the shoulder, and the "wild horse" stood and switched his tail. It pricked him again; he

switched his tail again. The men had by this time grown careless, and when the spike was finally used at his mane, he suddenly kicked one of them clear of the stage, and then resumed his unruffled calm. The public thought it was having fun all this time, but pretty soon it knew it. Nothing under heaven could disturb the gentle serenity of that doglike old horse. When Mazeppa was brought forward to be bound upon Old Bob's back, instead of pulling away, and rearing and fighting against the burden, his one and only quick movement was his violent effort to break away from his tormentors and welcome his master joyously.

"Oh!" groaned Miles, "kill him, somebody, before he kills me!"

While Mazeppa was being bound on the "wild horse's" back our instructions were to scream; therefore we screamed as before, and, being on the verge of insanity, Miles lifted his head from the horse's back, and said, "Oh, shut up, do!" The audience heard, and—well, it laughed some more, and then it discovered, when the men sprang away and left the horse free to dash madly up the mountain, that Mazeppa had kept one foot unbound to kick Old Bob with; and truly it did seem that the audience was going into convulsions—such laughter, pierced every now and then by the shrill scream of hysterics. Old Bob ambled up the first run all right, but, alas! for poor Mazeppa, as the "wild horse"

reached the first platform, a woman passed on the way to her room, and hungry Bob instantly stopped to negotiate a loan in sugar. Oh, it was dreadful—the wait—and when finally he reappeared, trotting — yes, trotting up the next run—Mr. Miles's foot could be plainly seen kicking with the regularity of a piston-rod, while his remarks were—well, they were irregular in the extreme!

Of course the play was hopelessly ruined. The audience laughed at the slightest mention of the "wild horse," and when the shepherds found horse and man, lying at the foot of the mountain, worn out and exhausted, the building seemed to shake with the laughter.

When the play was over at last, Old Bob walked up to his master and mumbled his hand. Mr. Miles pushed him away with pretended anger, crying: "You infernal old idiot, I'd sell you for a three-cent stamp with gum on it!"

Bob looked hard at him a moment; then he calmly crossed behind him and mumbled his other hand, and Mr. Miles pulled his ears, and said that he, himself, was the idiot for expecting an untrained, unrehearsed horse to play such a part, and Old Bob agreeing with him perfectly, they were, as always, at peace with each other.

THE TIPSTER

BY EDWIN LEFEVRE

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I

GILMARTIN was still laughing professionally at the prospective buyer's funny story when the telephone on his desk buzzed. He said: "Excuse me for a minute, old man," to the customer—Hopkins, the Connecticut manufacturer.

"Hello; who is this?" he spoke into the transmitter. "Oh, how are you?—Yes—I was out—Is that so?—Too bad—Too bad—Yes; just my luck to be out. I might have known it!—Do you think so?—Well, then, sell the 200 Occidental common—You know best—What about Trolley?—Hold on?—All right; just as you say—I hope so—I don't like to lose, and—Ha! ha!—I guess so—Good-by."

"It's from my brokers," explained Gilmartin, hanging up the receiver. "I'd have saved five hundred dollars if I had been here at half-past ten. They called me up to advise me to sell out, and the price is off over three points. I could have got out at a profit this morning; but no, sir; not I. I had to be away, trying to buy some camphor."

From "Wall Street Stories." Copyright, 1901, by McClure, Phillips & Co.

Hopkins was impressed. Gilmartin perceived it and went on, with an air of comical wrath which he thought was preferable to indifference: "It isn't the money I mind so much as the tough luck of it. I didn't make my trade in camphor after all and I lost in stocks, when if I'd only waited five minutes more in the office I'd have got the message from my brokers and saved my five hundred. Expensive, my time is, eh?" with a woful shake of the head.

"But you're ahead of the game, aren't you?" asked the customer, interestedly.

"Well, I guess yes. Just about twelve thousand."

That was more than Gilmartin had made; but having exaggerated, he immediately felt very kindly disposed toward the Connecticut man.

"Whew!" whistled Hopkins, admiringly. Gilmartin experienced a great tenderness toward him. The lie was made stingless by the customer's credulity. This brought a smile of subtle relief to Gilmartin's lips. He was a pleasant-faced, pleasant-voiced man of three-and-thirty. He exhaled health, contentment, neatness, and an easy conscience. Honesty and good-nature shone in his eyes. People liked to shake hands with him. It made his friends talk of his lucky star; and they envied him.

"I bought this yesterday for my wife; took it out of a little deal in Trolley," he told Hopkins, taking a small jewel-box from one of the desk's

drawers. It contained a diamond ring, somewhat showy, but obviously quite expensive. Hopkins's semi-envious admiration made Gilmartin add, genially: "What do you say to lunch? I feel I am entitled to a glass of 'fizz' to forget my bad luck of this morning." Then, in an exaggeratedly apologetic tone: "Nobody likes to lose five hundred dollars on an empty stomach!"

"She'll be delighted, of course," said Hopkins, thinking of Mrs. Gilmartin. Mrs. Hopkins loved jewelry.

"She's the nicest little woman that ever lived. Whatever is mine is hers; and what's hers is her own. Ha! ha! But," becoming nicely serious, "all that I'll make out of the stock market I'm going to put away for her, in her name. She can take better care of it than I; and, besides, she's entitled to it, anyhow, for being so nice to me."

That is how he told what a good husband he was. He felt so pleased over it that he went on, sincerely regretful: "She's visiting friends in Pennsylvania or I'd ask you to dine with us." And they went to a fashionable restaurant together.

Day after day Gilmartin thought persistently that Maiden Lane was too far from Wall Street. There came a week in which he could have made four very handsome "turns" had he but been in the brokers' office. He was out on business for his firm and when he returned the opportunity

had gone, leaving behind it vivid visions of what might have been; also the conviction that time, tide, and the ticker wait for no man. Instead of buying and selling quinine and balsams and essential oils for Maxwell & Kip, drug brokers and importers, he decided to make the buying and selling of stocks and bonds his exclusive business. The hours were easy; the profits would be great. He would make enough to live on. He would not let the Street take away what it had given. That was the great secret: to know when to quit! He would be content with a moderate amount, wisely invested in gilt-edged bonds. And then he would bid the Street good-by forever.

Force of long business custom and the indefinable fear of new ventures for a time fought successfully his increasing ticker-fever. But one day his brokers wished to speak to him, to urge him to sell out his entire holdings, having been advised of an epoch-making resolution by Congress. They had received the news in advance from a Washington customer. Other brokers had important connections in the Capital and therefore there was no time to lose. They dared not assume the responsibilty of selling him out without his permission. Five minutes—five eternities!—passed before they could talk by telephone with him; and when he gave his order to sell, the market had broken five or six points. The news was "out." The news agencies' slips

were in the brokers' offices and half of Wall Street knew. Instead of being among the first ten sellers Gilmartin was among the second hundred.

II

The clerks gave him a farewell dinner. All were there, even the head office-boy to whom the two-dollar subscription was no light matter. The man who probably would succeed Gilmartin as manager, Jenkins, acted as toastmaster. He made a witty speech which ended with a neatly turned compliment. Moreover, he seemed sincerely sorry to bid good-by to the man whose departure meant promotion — which was the nicest compliment of all. And the other clerks —old Williamson, long since ambition-proof; and young Hardy, bitten ceaselessly by it; and middle-aged Jameson, who knew he could run the business much better than Gilmartin; and Baldwin, who never thought of business in or out of the office—all told him how good he had been and related corroborative anecdotes that made him blush and the others cheer; and how sorry they were he would no longer be with them, but how glad he was going to do so much better by himself; and they hoped he would not "cut" them when he met them after he had become a great millionaire. And Gilmartin felt his heart grow soft and feelings not all of happiness came over him. Danny, the dean of the office boys, whose

surname was known only to the cashier, rose and said, in the tones of one speaking of a dear departed friend: "He was the best man in the place. He always was all right." Everybody laughed; whereupon Danny went on, with a defiant glare at the others: "I'd work for him for nothin' if he'd want me, instead of gettin' ten a week from any one else." And when they laughed the harder at this he said, stoutly: "Yes, I would!" His eyes filled with tears at their incredulity, which he feared might be shared by Mr. Gilmartin. But the toastmaster rose very gravely and said: "What's the matter with Danny?" And all shouted in unison: "He's all right!" with a cordiality so heartfelt that Danny smiled and sat down, blushing happily. And crusty Jameson, who knew he could run the business so much better than Gilmartin, stood up—he was the last speaker—and began: "In the ten years I've worked with Gilmartin, we've had our differences and—well—I—well—er—oh, DAMN IT!" and walked quickly to the head of the table and shook hands violently with Gilmartin for fully a minute, while all the others looked on in silence.

Gilmartin had been eager to go to Wall Street. But this leave-taking made him sad. The old Gilmartin who had worked with these men was no more and the new Gilmartin felt sorry. He had never stopped to think how much they cared for him nor indeed how very much he cared for them.

He told them, very simply, he did not expect ever again to spend such pleasant years anywhere as at the old office; and as for his spells of ill-temper—oh, yes, they needn't shake their heads; he knew he often was irritable—he had meant well and trusted they would forgive him. If he had his life to live over again he would try really to deserve all that they had said of him on this evening. And he was very, very sorry to leave them. "Very sorry, boys; very sorry. *Very* sorry!" he finished lamely, with a wistful smile. He shook hands with each man—a strong grip, as though he were about to go on a journey from which he might never return—and in his heart of hearts there was a new doubt of the wisdom of going to Wall Street. But it was too late to draw back.

They escorted him to his house. They wished to be with him to the last possible minute.

III

Everybody in the drug trade seemed to think that Gilmartin was on the highroad to Fortune. Those old business acquaintances and former competitors whom he happened to meet in the street-cars or in the theatre lobbies always spoke to him as to a millionaire-to-be, in what they imagined was correct Wall Street jargon, to show him that they too knew something of the great game. But their efforts made him smile

with a sense of superiority, at the same time that their admiration for his cleverness and their good-natured envy for his luck made his soul thrill joyously. Among his new friends in Wall Street also he found much to enjoy. The other customers—some of them very wealthy men—listened to his views regarding the market as attentively as he, later, felt it his polite duty to listen to theirs. The brokers themselves treated him as a "good fellow." They cajoled him into trading often—every one hundred shares he bought or sold meant $12.50 to them—and when he won, they praised his unerring discernment. When he lost they soothed him by scolding him for his recklessness—just as a mother will treat her three-year-old's fall as a great joke in order to deceive the child into laughing at its misfortune. It was an average office with an average clientèle.

From ten to three they stood before the quotation board and watched a quick-witted boy chalk the price changes, which one or another of the customers read aloud from the tape as it came from the ticker. The higher stocks went the more numerous the customers became, being allured in great flocks to the Street by the tales of their friends, who had profited greatly by the rise. All were winning, for all were buying stocks in a bull market. They resembled each other marvelously, these men who differed so greatly in cast of features and complexion and

age. Life to all of them was full of joy. The very ticker sounded mirthful; its clicking told of golden jokes. And Gilmartin and the other customers laughed heartily at the mildest of stories without even waiting for the point of the joke. At times their fingers clutched the air happily, as if they actually felt the good money the ticker was presenting to them. They were all neophytes at the great game—lambkins who were bleating blithely to inform the world what clever and formidable wolves they were. Some of them had sustained occasional losses; but these were trifling compared with their winnings.

When the slump came all were heavily committed to the bull side. It was a bad slump. It was so unexpected—by the lambs—that all of them said, very gravely, it came like a thunderclap out of a clear sky. While it lasted, that is, while the shearing of the flock was proceeding, it was very uncomfortable. Those same joyous, winning stock-gamblers, with beaming faces, of the week before, were fear-clutched, losing stock-gamblers, with livid faces, on what they afterward called the day of the panic. It really was only a slump; rather sharper than usual. Too many lambs had been over-speculating. The wholesale dealers in securities—and insecurities—held very little of their own wares, having sold them to the lambs, and wanted them back now—cheaper. The customers' eyes, as on happier days, were intent on the quotation board. Their

dreams were rudely shattered; the fast horses some had all but bought joined the steam yachts others almost had chartered. The beautiful homes they had been building were torn down in the twinkling of an eye. And the demolisher of dreams and dwellings was the ticker, that instead of golden jokes was now clicking financial death.

They could not take their eyes from the board before them. Their own ruin, told in mournful numbers by the little machine, fascinated them. To be sure, poor Gilmartin said: "I've changed my mind about Newport. I guess I'll spend the summer on my own *Hotel de Roof!*" And he grinned; but he grinned alone. Wilson, the dry goods man, who laughed so joyously at everybody's jokes, was now watching, as if under a hypnotic spell, the lips of the man who sat on the high stool beside the ticker and called out the prices to the quotation boy. Now and again Wilson's own lips made curious grimaces, as if speaking to himself. Brown, the slender, pale-faced man, was outside in the hall, pacing to and fro. All was lost, including honor. And he was afraid to look at the ticker, afraid to hear the prices shouted, yet hoping—for a miracle! Gilmartin came out from the office, saw Brown and said, with sickly bravado: "I held out as long as I could. But they got *my* ducats. A sporting life comes high, I tell you!" But Brown did not heed him, and Gilmartin pushed the elevator button impatiently and cursed at the delay. He not

only had lost the "paper" profits he had accumulated during the bull market, but all his savings of years had crumbled away beneath the strokes of the ticker that day. It was the same with all. They would not take a small loss at first, but had held on, in the hope of a recovery that would "let them out even." And prices had sunk and sunk until the loss was so great that it seemed only proper to hold on, if need be a year, for sooner or later prices must come back. But the break "shook them out," and prices went just so much lower because so many people had to sell whether they would or not.

IV

After the slump most of the customers returned to their legitimate business—sadder, but it is to be feared not much wiser men. Gilmartin, after the first numbing shock, tried to learn of fresh opportunities in the drug business. But his heart was not in his search. There was the shame of confessing defeat in Wall Street so soon after leaving Maiden Lane; but far stronger than this was the effect of the poison of gambling. If it was bad enough to be obliged to begin lower than he had been at Maxwell & Kip's, it was worse to condemn himself to long weary years of work in the drug business when his reward, if he remained strong and healthy, would consist merely in being able to save a few thou-

sands. But a few lucky weeks in the stock market would win him back all he had lost—and more!

He should have begun in a small way while he was learning to speculate. He saw it now very clearly. Every one of his mistakes had been due to inexperience. He had imagined he knew the market. But it was only now that he really knew it, and therefore it was only now, after the slump had taught him so much, that he could reasonably hope to succeed. His mind, brooding over his losses, definitely dismissed as futile the resumption of the purchase and sale of drugs, and dwelt persistently on the sudden acquisition of stock market wisdom. Properly applied, this wisdom ought to mean much to him. In a few weeks he was again spending his days before the quotation board, gossiping with those customers who had survived, giving and receiving advice. And as time passed the grip of Wall Street on his soul grew stronger until it strangled all other aspirations. He could talk, think, dream of nothing but stocks. He could not read the newspapers without thinking how the market would "take" the news contained therein. If a huge refinery burned down, with a loss to the "Trust" of $4,000,000, he sighed because he had not foreseen the catastrophe and had sold Sugar short. If a strike by the men of the Suburban Trolley Company led to violence and destruction of life and property, he cursed an unrelenting Fate be-

cause he had not had the prescience to "put out" a thousand shares of Trolley. And he constantly calculated to the last fraction of a point how much money he would have made if he had sold short just before the calamity at the very top prices and had covered his stock at the bottom. Had he only known! The atmosphere of the Street, the odor of speculation surrounded him on all sides, enveloped him like a fog, from which the things of the outside world appeared as though seen through a veil. He lived in the district where men do not say "Good-morning" on meeting one another, but "How's the market?" or, when one asks: "How do you feel?" receives for an answer: "Bullish!" or "Bearish!" instead of a reply regarding the state of health.

At first, after the fatal slump, Gilmartin importuned his brokers to let him speculate on credit, in a small way. They did. They were kindly enough men and sincerely wished to help him. But luck ran against him. With the obstinacy of unsuperstitious gamblers he insisted on fighting Fate. He was a bull in a bear market; and the more he lost the more he thought the inevitable "rally" in prices was due. He bought in expectation of it and lost again and again, until he owed the brokers a greater sum than he could possibly pay; and they refused point blank to give him credit for another cent, disregarding his vehement entreaties to buy a last hundred, just one more chance, the last, be-

cause he would be sure to win. And, of course, the long-expected happened and the market went up with a rapidity that made the Street blink; and Gilmartin figured that had not the brokers refused his last order, he would have made enough to pay off the indebtedness and have left, in addition, $2,950; for he would have "pyramided" on the way up. He showed the brokers his figures, accusingly, and they had some words about it and he left the office, almost tempted to sue the firm for conspiracy with intent to defraud; but decided that it was "another of Luck's sockdolagers" and let it go at that, gambler-like.

When he returned to the brokers' office—the next day—he began to speculate in the only way he could—vicariously. Smith, for instance, who was long of 500 St. Paul at 125, took less interest in the deal than did Gilmartin, who thenceforth assiduously studied the news slips and sought information on St. Paul all over the Street, listening thrillingly to tips and rumors regarding the stock, suffering keenly when the price declined, laughing and chirruping blithely if the quotations moved upward, exactly as though it were his own stock. In a measure it was as an anodyne to his ticker fever. Indeed, in some cases his interest was so poignant and his advice so frequent—he would speak of *our* deal—that the lucky winner gave him a small share of his spoils, which Gilmartin accepted

without hesitation—he was beyond pride-wounding by now—and promptly used to back some miniature deal of his own on the Consolidated Exchange or even in "Percy's"—a dingy little bucket shop, where they took orders for two shares of stock on a margin of 1 per cent; that is, where a man could bet as little as two dollars.

Later, it often came to pass that Gilmartin would borrow a few dollars when the customers were not trading actively. The amounts he borrowed diminished by reason of the increasing frequency of their refusals. Finally, he was asked to stay away from the office where once he had been an honored and pampered customer.

He became a Wall Street "has been" and could be seen daily on New Street, back of the Consolidated Exchange, where the "put" and "call" brokers congregate. The tickers in the saloons nearby fed his gambler's appetite. From time to time luckier men took him into the same be-tickered saloons, where he ate at the free lunch counters and drank beer and talked stocks and listened to the lucky winners' narratives with lips tremulous with readiness to smile and grimace. At times the gambler in him would assert itself and he would tell the lucky winners, wrathfully, how the stock he wished to buy but couldn't the week before had risen 18 points. But they, saturated with their own ticker fever, would nod absently, their soul's eyes fixed on some quotation-to-be; or they would not nod at all, but in

their eagerness to look at the tape, from which they had been absent two long minutes, would leave him without a single word of consolation or even of farewell.

V

One day, in New Street, he overheard a very well-known broker tell another that Mr. Sharpe was "going to move up Pennsylvania Central right away." The overhearing of the conversation was a bit of rare good luck that raised Gilmartin from his sodden apathy and made him hasten to his brother-in-law, who kept a grocery store in Brooklyn. He implored Griggs to go to a broker and buy as much Pennsylvania Central as he could—that is, if he wished to live in luxury the rest of his life. Sam Sharpe was going to put it up. Also, he borrowed ten dollars.

Griggs was tempted. He debated with himself many hours, and at length yielded with misgivings. He took his savings and bought one hundred shares of Pennsylvania Central at 64, and began to neglect his business in order to study the financial pages of the newspapers. Little by little Gilmartin's whisper set in motion within him the wheels of a ticker that printed on his day-dreams the mark of the dollar. His wife, seeing him preoccupied, thought business was bad; but Griggs denied it, confirming her worst fears. Finally, he had a telephone put in his little shop, to be able to talk to his broker.

Gilmartin, with the ten dollars he had borrowed, promptly bought ten shares in a bucket shop at 63⅞; the stock promptly went to 62⅞; he was promptly "wiped"; and the stock promptly went back to 64½.

On the next day a fellow-customer of Gilmartin of old days invited him to have a drink. Gilmartin resented the man's evident prosperity. He felt indignant at the ability of the other to buy hundreds of shares. But the liquor soothed him, and in a burst of mild remorse he told Smithers, after an apprehensive look about him as if he feared some one might overhear: "I'll tell you something, on the dead q. t., for your own benefit."

"Fire away!"

"Pa. Cent. is going 'way up."

"Yes?" said Smithers, calmly.

"Yes; it will cross par sure."

"Umph!" between munches of a pretzel.

"Yes. Sam Sharpe told"—Gilmartin was on the point of saying a "friend of mine," but caught himself and went on, impressively—"told me, yesterday, to buy Pa. Cent., as he had accumulated his full line, and was ready to whoop it up. And you know what Sharpe is," he finished, as if he thought Smithers was familiar with Sharpe's powers.

"Is that so," nibbled Smithers.

"Why, when Sharpe makes up his mind to put up a stock, as he intends to do with Pa. Cent.,

nothing on earth can stop him. He told me he would make it cross par within sixty days. This is no hearsay, no tip. It's cold facts. I don't *hear* it's going up; I don't *think* it's going up; I *know* it's going up. Understand?" And he shook his right forefinger with a hammering motion.

In less than five minutes Smithers was so wrought up that he bought 500 shares and promised solemnly not to "take his profits," *i. e.* sell out, until Gilmartin said the word. Then they had another drink and another look at the ticker.

"You want to keep in touch with me," was Gilmartin's parting shot. "I'll tell you what Sharpe tells me. But you must keep it quiet," with a sidewise nod that pledged Smithers to honorable secrecy.

Had Gilmartin met Sharpe face to face, he would not have known who was before him.

Shortly after he left Smithers he buttonholed another acquaintance, a young man who thought he knew Wall Street, and therefore had a hobby —manipulation. No one could induce him to buy stocks by telling him how well the companies were doing, how bright the prospects, etc. That was bait for "suckers," not for clever young stock operators. But any one, even a stranger, who said that "they"—the perennially mysterious "they," the "big men," the mighty "manipulators" whose life was one prolonged conspiracy to pull the wool over the public's eyes—

"they" were going to "jack up" these or the other shares, was welcomed and his advice acted upon. Young Freeman believed in nothing but "their" wickedness and "their" power to advance or depress stock values at will. Thinking of his wisdom had given him a chronic sneer.

"You're just the man I was looking for," said Gilmartin, who hadn't thought of the young man at all.

"Are you a deputy sheriff?"

"No." A slight pause for oratorical effect. "I had a long talk with Sam to-day."

"What Sam?"

"Sharpe. The old boy sent for me. He was in mighty good humor too. Tickled to death. He might well be—he's got 60,000 shares of Pennsylvania Central. And there's going to be from 50 to 60 points profit in it."

"H'm!" sniffed Freeman, sceptically, yet impressed by the change in Gilmartin's attitude from the money-borrowing humility of the previous week to the confident tone of a man with a straight tip. Sharpe was notoriously kind to his old friends—rich or poor.

"I was there when the papers were signed," Gilmartin said, hotly. "I was going to leave the room, but Sam told me I needn't. I can't tell you what it is about; really I can't. But he's simply going to put the stock above par. It's 64½ now, and you know and I know that by the time it is 75 the newspapers will all be talking about in-

side buying; and at 85 everybody will want to buy it on account of important developments; and at 95 there will be millions of bull tips on it and rumors of increased dividends, and people who would not look at it thirty points lower will rush in and buy it by the bushel. Let me know who is manipulating a stock, and to h—l with dividends and earnings. Them's *my* sentiments," with a final hammering nod, as if driving in a profound truth.

"Same here," assented Freeman, cordially. He was attacked on his vulnerable side.

Strange things happen in Wall Street. Sometimes tips come true. It so proved in this case. Sharpe started the stock upward brilliantly—the movement became historic in the Street—and Pa. Cent. soared dizzily and all the newspapers talked of it and the public went mad over it and it touched 80 and 85 and 88 and higher, and then Gilmartin made his brother-in-law sell out and Smithers and Freeman. Their profits were: Griggs, $3,000; Smithers, $15,100; Freeman, $2,750. Gilmartin made them give him a good percentage. He had no trouble with his brother-in-law. Gilmartin told him it was an inviolable Wall Street custom and so Griggs paid, with an air of much experience in such matters. Freeman was more or less grateful. But Smithers met Gilmartin, and full of his good luck repeated what he had told a dozen men within the hour: "I did a dandy stroke the other day. Pa. Cent.

looked to me like higher prices and I bought a wad of it. I've cleaned up a tidy sum," and he looked proud of his own penetration. He really had forgotten that it was Gilmartin who had given him the tip. But not so Gilmartin, who retorted, witheringly:

"Well, I've often heard of folks that you put into good things and they make money and afterward they come to you and tell how damned smart they were to hit it right. But you can't work that on me. I've got witnesses."

"Witnesses?" echoed Smithers, looking cheap. He remembered.

"Yes, wit-ness-es," mimicked Gilmartin, scornfully. "I all but had to get on my knees to make you buy it. And I told you when to sell it, too. The information came to me straight from headquarters and you got the use of it, and now the least you can do is to give me twenty-five hundred dollars."

In the end he accepted eight hundred dollars. He told mutual friends that Smithers had cheated him.

VI

It seemed as though the regeneration of Gilmartin had been achieved when he changed his shabby raiment for expensive clothes. He paid his tradesmen's bills and moved into better quarters. He spent his money as though he had made millions. One week after he had closed out the

deal his friends would have sworn Gilmartin had always been prosperous. That was his exterior. His inner self remained the same—a gambler. He began to speculate again, in the office of Freeman's brokers.

At the end of the second month he had lost not only the $1,200 he had deposited with the firm, but an additional $250 he had given his wife and had been obliged to "borrow" back from her, despite her assurances that he would lose it. This time the slump was really unexpected by all, even by the magnates—the mysterious and all-powerful "they" of Freeman's—so that the loss of the second fortune did not reflect on Gilmartin's ability as a speculator, but on his luck. As a matter of fact, he had been too careful and had sinned from over-timidity at first, only to plunge later and lose all.

As the result of much thought about his losses Gilmartin became a professional tipster. To let others speculate for him seemed the only sure way of winning. He began by advising ten victims—he learned in time to call them clients—to sell Steel Rod preferred, each man 100 shares; and to a second ten he urged the purchase of the same quantity of the same stock. To all he advised taking four points' profit. Not all followed his advice, but the seven clients who sold it made between them nearly $3,000 overnight. His percentage amounted to $287.50. Six bought, and when they lost he told them confidentially how

the treachery of a leading member of the pool had obliged the pool managers to withdraw their support from the stock temporarily, whence the decline. They grumbled; but he assured them that he himself had lost nearly $1,600 of his own on account of the traitor.

For some months Gilmartin made a fair living, but business became very dull. People learned to fight shy of his tips. The persuasiveness was gone from his inside news and from his confidential advice from Sharpe and from his beholding with his own eyes the signing of epoch-making documents. Had he been able to make his customers alternate their winnings and losses he might have kept his trade. But, for example, "Dave" Rossiter, in Stuart & Stern's office, stupidly received the wrong tip six times in succession. It wasn't Gilmartin's fault, but Rossiter's bad luck.

At length, failing to get enough clients in the ticker district itself, Gilmartin was forced to advertise in an afternoon paper, six times a week, and in the Sunday edition of one of the leading morning dailies. They ran like this:

WE MAKE MONEY

for our investors by the best system ever devised. Deal with genuine experts. Two methods of operating; one speculative, the other ensures absolute safety.

NOW

is the time to invest in a certain stock for ten points sure profit. Three points margin will carry it. Remember how correct we have been on other stocks. Take advantage of this move.

IOWA MIDLAND.

Big movement coming in this stock. It's very near at hand. Am waiting daily for word. Will get it in time. Splendid opportunity to make big money. It costs only a 2-cent stamp to write to me.

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION.

Private secretary of banker and stock operator of world-wide reputation has valuable information. I don't wish your money. Use your own broker. All I want is a share of what you will surely make if you follow my advice.

WILL ADVANCE $40 PER SHARE.

A fortune to be made in a railroad stock. Deal pending which will advance same $40 per share within three months. Am in position to keep informed as to developments and the operations of a pool. Parties who will carry for me 100 shares with a New York Stock Exchange house will receive the full benefit of information. Investment safe and sure. Highest references given.

He prospered amazingly. Answers came to him from furniture dealers on Fourth Avenue and dairymen up the State and fruit growers in Delaware and factory workers in Massachusetts and electricians in New Jersey and coal miners in Pennsylvania and shopkeepers and physicians and plumbers and undertakers in towns and cities near and far. Every morning Gilmartin telegraphed to scores of people—at their expense—to sell, and to scores of others to buy the same stocks. And he claimed his commissions from the winners.

Little by little his savings grew; and with them grew his desire to speculate on his own account. It made him irritable not to gamble.

He met Freeman one day in one of his dissatisfied moods. Out of politeness he asked the young cynic the universal query of the Street:

"What do you think of 'em?" He meant stocks.

"What difference does it make what *I* think?" sneered Freeman, with proud humility. "I'm nobody." But he looked as if he did not agree with himself.

"What do you *know?*" pursued Gilmartin mollifyingly.

"I know enough to be long of Gotham Gas. I just bought a thousand shares at 180." He really had bought a hundred only.

"What on?"

"On information. I got it straight from a director of the company. Look here, Gilmartin, I'm pledged to secrecy. But, for your own benefit, I'll just tell you to buy all the Gas you possibly can carry. The deal is on. I know that certain papers were signed last night, and they are almost ready to spring it on the public. They haven't got all the stock they want. When they get it, look out for fireworks."

Gilmartin did not perceive any resemblance between Freeman's tips and his own.

He said, hesitatingly, as though ashamed of his timidity:

"The stock seems pretty high at 180."

"You won't think so when it sells at 250. Gilmartin, I don't *hear* this; I don't *think* it; I *know* it!"

"All right; I'm in," quoth Gilmartin, jovially. He felt a sense of emancipation now that he had

made up his mind to resume his speculating. He took every cent of the nine hundred dollars he had made from telling people the same things that Freeman told him now, and bought a hundred Gotham Gas at $185 a share. Also he telegraphed to all his clients to plunge in the stock.

It fluctuated between 184 and 186 for a fortnight. Freeman daily asseverated that "they" were accumulating the stock. But, one fine day, the directors met, agreed that business was bad, and having sold out most of their own holdings, decided to reduce the dividend rate from 8 to 6 per cent. Gotham Gas broke seventeen points in ten short minutes. Gilmartin lost all he had. He found it impossible to pay for his advertisements. The telegraph companies refused to accept any more "collect" messages. This deprived Gilmartin of his income as a tipster. Griggs had kept on speculating and had lost all his money and his wife's in a little deal in Iowa Midland. All that Gilmartin could hope to get from him was an occasional invitation to dinner. Mrs. Gilmartin, after they were dispossessed for non-payment of rent, left her husband, and went to live with a sister in Newark who did not like Gilmartin.

His clothes became shabby and his meals irregular. But always in his heart, as abiding as an inventor's faith in himself, there dwelt the hope that some day, somehow, he would "strike it rich" in the stock market.

One day he borrowed five dollars from a man who had made five thousand in Cosmopolitan Traction. The stock, the man said, had only begun to go up, and Gilmartin believed it and bought five shares in "Percy's," his favorite bucket shop. The stock began to rise slowly but steadily. The next afternoon "Percy's" was raided, the proprietor having disagreed with the police as to price.

Gilmartin lingered about New Street, talking with other customers of the raided bucket shop, discussing whether or not it was a "put up job" of old Percy himself, who, it was known, had been losing money to the crowd for weeks past. One by one the victims went away and at length Gilmartin left the ticker district. He walked slowly down Wall Street, then turned up William Street, thinking of his luck. Cosmopolitan Traction had certainly looked like higher prices. Indeed, it seemed to him that he could almost hear the stock shouting, articulately: *"I'm going up, right away, right away!"* If somebody would buy a thousand shares and agree to give him the profits on a hundred, on ten, on one!

But he had not even his carfare. Then he remembered that he had not eaten since breakfast. It did him no good to remember it now. He would have to get his dinner from Griggs in Brooklyn.

"Why," Gilmartin told himself with a burst of

curious self-contempt, "I can't even buy a cup of coffee!"

He raised his head and looked about him to find how insignificant a restaurant it was in which he could not buy even a cup of coffee. He had reached Maiden Lane. As his glance ran up and down the north side of that street, it was arrested by the sign:

MAXWELL & KIP

At first he felt but vaguely what it meant. It had grown unfamiliar with absence. The clerks were coming out. Jameson, looking crustier than ever, as though he were forever thinking how much better than Jenkins he could run the business; Danny, some inches taller, no longer an office boy, but spick and span in a blue serge suit and a necktie of the latest style, exhaling health and correctness; Williamson, grown very gray and showing on his face thirty years of routine; Baldwin, happy as of yore at the ending of the day's work, and smiling at the words of Jenkins—Gilmartin's successor, who wore an air of authority, of the habit of command which he had not known in the old days.

Of a sudden Gilmartin was in the midst of his old life. He saw all that he had been, all that he might still be. And he was overwhelmed. He longed to rush to his old associates, to speak to them, to shake hands with them, to be the old

Gilmartin. He was about to step toward Jenkins, but stopped abruptly. His clothes were shabby, and he felt ashamed. But, he apologized to himself, he could tell them how he had made a hundred thousand and had lost it. And he even might borrow a few dollars from Jenkins.

Gilmartin turned on his heel with a sudden impulse and walked away from Maiden Lane quickly. All that he thought now was that he would not have them see him in his plight. He felt the shabbiness of his clothes without looking at them. As he walked, a great sense of loneliness came over him.

He was back in Wall Street. At the head of the Street was old Trinity; to the right the Sub-Treasury; to the left the Stock Exchange.

From Maiden Lane to the Lane of the Ticker —such had been his life.

"If I could only buy some Cosmopolitan Traction!" he said. Then he walked forlornly northward, to the great bridge, on his way to Brooklyn, to eat with Griggs, the ruined grocery man.

THOMAS JEFFERSON BROWN

BY JAMES OLIVER CURWOOD

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THERE are not many who will remember him as Thomas Jefferson Brown. For ten years he had been mildly ashamed of himself, and out of respect for people who were dead, and for a dozen or so who were living, he had the good taste to drop his last name. The fact that it was only Brown didn't matter.

"Tack Thomas Jefferson to Brown," he said, "and you've got a name that sticks!"

It had an aristocratic sound; and Thomas Jefferson, with the Brown cut off, was still aristocratic, when you came to count the red corpuscles in him. In some sort of way he was related to two dead Presidents, three dead army officers, a living college professor, and a few common people. He was legitimately born to the purple, but fate had sent him off on a curious ricochet in a game all of its own, and changed him from Thomas Jefferson Brown into just plain Thomas Jefferson without the Brown.

He was one of those specimens who, when you meet them, somehow make you feel there are a few lost kings of the earth, as well as lost lambs. He was what we called a "first-sighter"—that is,

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you liked him the instant you looked at him. You knew without further acquaintance that he was a man whom you could trust with your money, your friendship—anything you had. He was big, with a wholesome brown face, blond hair, and gray eyes that seemed always to be laughing and twinkling, even when he was hungry. He carried about with him a load of cheerfulness so big that it was constantly spilling over on other people.

There was a time when Thomas Jefferson Brown had little white cards with his name on them. That was when he went to college, and his lungs weren't so good. It was then that some big doctor told him that if he wanted to live to have grandchildren, the best thing for him to do was to "tramp it" for a time—live out of doors, sleep out of doors, do nothing but breathe fresh air and walk. That doctor was Fate, playing his game behind a pair of spectacles and a bumpy forehead. He saved Thomas Jefferson Brown, all right; but he turned him into plain Thomas Jefferson.

For Thomas Jefferson Brown never got over taking his medicine. He kept on tramping. He got big and broad and happy. Somewhere, perhaps in a barn, he caught a microbe that made him dislike ordinary work. He would set to and help a farmer saw wood all day, just for company and grub; but you couldn't hire him to go into an office, or settle down to anything steady,

for twenty-five dollars a day. He had a scientific name for the thing that was in him—the *wanderlust* bug, I think he called it; and he said it was better than the Chinese lady-bugs that the government imports to save California fruit.

The nearest Thomas Jefferson ever came to going back to Thomas Jefferson Brown was when he took a job at braking on the Southern Pacific. That held him for three days less than two weeks.

"The *wanderlust* bug wouldn't stand for it," he explained.

Right after that he struck a farmer's house where the farmer was sick, almost dying, with three little kids and a frail little woman trying to keep things up. He worked like ten men for more than a month on that farm, and when he went away he wouldn't take a cent. That's the sort of ne'er-do-well Thomas Jefferson was.

He wouldn't beg. He'd go three days without grub, and laugh all the time. It was mostly in the country and in small villages that he made his living. He could play seven different kinds of instruments without any instruments at all. Did it all with his mouth. And the kids—they went wild over him. In return for his entertainment, Thomas Jefferson wasn't ashamed to take whatever came to him in the way of odd nickels and dimes.

Once the manager of a vaudeville house heard him on a street corner, and offered him a job at

fifty a week if he'd sign a contract for a dozen weeks.

"Good Lord," said Thomas Jefferson, "I wouldn't know what to do with six hundred dollars!"

The next week he was cooking in a lumber-camp for his board. That's Thomas Jefferson—or, rather, that's what he was.

And now we're coming to the girl who killed the bug in Thomas Jefferson—and rescued the king. She was born swell. She has blue eyes—the sort that can light up a dark day, and can make your head turn dizzy when they smile at you. And she's got the right sort of hair to go with 'em—red and gold and brown all mixed up, until you can't tell which is which; the sort that makes you wonder if some big artist hasn't been painting a picture for you, when you see it out in the sunshine.

She comes of a titled family, but she'd want to die to-morrow if Thomas Jefferson Brown didn't worship her from the tips of her little toes to the top of her pretty head. She thinks he's a king. And he is—one of those great, big, healthy kings that nature sometimes grows when it has half a chance.

II

It's curious how the whole thing happened. Thomas Jefferson wandered up to Portland at the time we were fitting out a ship for a whaling

cruise. We saw him imitating a banjo for a lot of kids down on the wharf, and the minute our eyes lit on him—Tucker's and mine—we liked him. It isn't necessary to go into the details of what happened after that. Just a week later, when Thomas Jefferson and I were shaking hands for the last time, a queer sort of look came into his eyes, and he said:

"Bobby, you're the first man I ever knew that makes me feel like crying when you leave me."

He said it just like one of the kids he'd tickled half to death on the wharf. There was a little jerking in his throat, and there came into his face a look so gentle that it made me think of a girl.

"Why don't you come along on this cruise with me?" I said.

Thomas Jefferson gave a sudden start, and a queer expression came into his eyes, as if he saw something out on the sea that had startled him. Then he laughed. You could hear that laugh of Thomas Jefferson's three blocks away, and sunshine in winter couldn't bring more cheer than the sound of it. He looked at me for a moment, and then said:

"Bobby, I'll go!"

It wasn't forty-eight hours before Thomas Jefferson had a first mortgage on every soul aboard the "Sleeping Sealer," from the cap'n to the oiler down in the engine-room. He was able, all right, but you couldn't have made an able seaman out of him in a hundred years. For all that,

he did the work of three men. The first thing you heard when you woke up in the morning was his whistle, and the last thing you heard at night was his laugh or his song. He did everything, from cooking to telling us why Germany couldn't lick England, and how the United States could clean up the map of the earth if Congress would spend less money on job-making bureaus and a little more on war-ships.

Then we discovered what was in the old alligator-skin valise he carried. It was books. Half the time he didn't have to read to us, but just talked off the stuff he'd learned by heart. We got to know a lot before the trip was half begun, just by associating with Thomas Jefferson Brown—or Thomas Jefferson, as he was then.

We spent three months up about the Spicer Islands, and then came down toward Southampton Land. Thomas Jefferson was the happiest man aboard until we caught sight of a coast, and then the change began. After that he'd get restless whenever land hove in sight.

Six weeks later we came down into Roes Welcome Sound, planning to get out through Hudson Strait before winter set in. The fact that we were almost homeward bound didn't seem to affect Thomas Jefferson. I saw the beginning of the end when he said to me one day:

"Bobby, I've never seen this northern country. It's a big, glorious country, and I'd like to go ashore."

There wasn't any use arguing with him. The cap'n tried it, we all tried it, and at last Thomas Jefferson prepared to take his leave of us at Point Fullerton, just eight hundred miles north of civilization, where there's an Eskimo village and a police station of the Royal Northwest Mounted. He came to me the day before we were going to take him ashore, and said:

"Bobby, why don't you come along? Let's chum it, old man, and see what happens."

When he went ashore, the next day, I went with him, and we each took three months' supply of grub and our pay. From that hour there began the big change — the change which turned Thomas Jefferson back into Thomas Jefferson Brown, and which it took a girl to finish.

It came first in his eyes, and then in his laugh. After that he seemed to grow an inch or two taller, and he lost that careless, shiftless way which comes of what he called the *wanderlust* bug. There wasn't so much laughter in his eyes, but something better had taken its place—a deeper, grayer, more thoughtful look, and he didn't play those queer things with his mouth any more.

The police at Point Fullerton hardly had a glimpse of him as the big, sunny, loose-jointed giant, Thomas Jefferson. He had become a bronze-bearded god, with the strength of five men in his splendid shoulders, and a port to his

head that made you think of a piece of sculpture. "You can't be anything but a *man* up here, Bobby," he said one day, and I knew what he meant. "It's not the air, it's not the cold, and it's not the fight you make to keep life in your body," he added, "but it's God! That's what it is, Bobby. There's not a sound or a sight up here, outside of that little cabin, that's human. It's all God—there's nothing else—and it makes you think!"

III

It was spring when we came down to Fort Churchill, and it was summer when we struck York Factory. It was the middle of one of those summer days when strawberries ripen even up there, that the last prop fell out from under Thomas Jefferson, and he became Thomas Jefferson Brown. He met Lady Isobel. The title did not really belong to her, for she was only the cousin of Lord Meton; but Thomas Jefferson Brown called her that from the first.

It was down close to the boats, where their launch lay, and the wind had frolicked with Lady Isobel's hair until it rippled about her face and shoulders like a net of spun gold. She was bareheaded, and he was bareheaded, and they stared for a moment, her blue eyes flashing into his gray ones; and then there came into her face a color like rose, and he bowed, as one of the old-time Presidents might have bowed to a hair-

powdered beauty in the days when the Capitol was young.

That was the beginning, and to his honor be it said that Thomas Jefferson Brown never revealed that he was a gentleman born, though his heart was stricken with love at that first sight of Lady Isobel's lovely face. Lord Meton wanted a man—one who could handle a canoe and shoulder two hundred pounds of duff; and "Tom" became the man, working like a slave for a month; but always with the pride and bearing of a king.

It wasn't difficult to see what was happening. Lord Meton saw, and understood; but he knew that the proud blood in Lady Isobel was an invulnerable armor that would protect her from indiscretion. And as for Thomas Jefferson Brown—

"Bobby," he said, standing up straight and tall, "if she can only love a gentleman, and not a man, what's the use of playing cards?"

One day, when he had to carry Lady Isobel ashore from a big York boat, something inside him got the best of his arms, and he held her tight—so tight that her eyes came down to his with a frightened look, and he heard a breath come from her that was almost a sob. They gazed at each other for a moment, and it was then that Thomas Jefferson Brown told her that he loved her—not in words, but in a way that she understood.

When he set her down on shore she was as white as death. From that day she treated him a little coolly—up to the last moment, out on the bay.

It was a bright, sunshiny day when the three—Lord Meton, Lady Isobel, and Thomas Jefferson Brown—set off in a big birchbark canoe, bound for Harrison's Island, a dozen miles out from the mainland. But you can't tell much about sunshine and calm on Hudson Bay. They're like a jealous woman's smile, masking something hidden. Four miles out, the wind came up; midway between the island and the mainland, it was a small gale. Even at that, Thomas Jefferson Brown would have made it all right if the beat of the sea hadn't broken a rotten thread under the bow, letting the birch seam part with a suddenness that sent a little spurt of water up into Lady Isobel's face.

What? No, this isn't going to have the regulation hero-act end, in which Thomas Jefferson Brown saves the life of the lady he loves. It's something different — something that Thomas Jefferson Brown never guessed at when the water spurted in, and Lady Isobel turned to him with a little scream, her beautiful blue eyes wide and filled with horror.

"Don't be afraid," he said. "Here, take this jacket and hold it down tight over the seam. We'll reach the island, all right."

Lady Isobel held the jacket over the hole, and

Thomas Jefferson Brown put a strength into his paddle that threatened to crack off the handle. After a minute or two, he saw a little trickle of water beginning to ooze in about the edges of the jacket. He leaned back for an instant, and signaled Lord Meton to bend over toward him.

"Take off your clothes," he said, so low that Lady Isobel couldn't hear. "Can you swim?"

"Not a stroke," said Lord Meton, and his face went as white as chalk; but it was no whiter than Thomas Jefferson Brown's.

When a birchbark seam begins to part there's no power on earth that will hold it when the canoe is heavily loaded. A few minutes later, the water was gushing in by the quart about Lady Isobel's feet. She fought hard to hold it back. When at last she saw that it was hopeless, she turned again, to see Lord Meton in his underwear, and Thomas Jefferson Brown stripped of everything but his shirt and his buckskin trousers, which don't water-sog. He laughed straight into her face, as if it was all an amusing joke; and then, suddenly, he began playing that banjo thing with his mouth.

It was all so strange, with the beat of the sea, the wail of the wind, and Thomas Jefferson Brown sitting there as if nothing were happening, that Lady Isobel just stared in astonishment, while the water gushed in about her. At last he put down his paddle, and stretched out both hands; and it seemed the most natural thing

in the world that her two hands should come out to meet his.

"Listen," he said, and his eyes were telling her again what they told her on the day when he brought her in from the York boat. "You'll do as I tell you, won't you? And you won't be afraid?"

For an instant Lady Isobel looked at Lord Meton, shrinking and shivering in the stern of the canoe; and then she looked back to the other man's face, and blue fires seemed to leap into her eyes.

"With *you*—no, I'm not afraid," she said.

She leaned toward him, nearer and nearer, as the water rose about them, looking straight into his eyes. They both knew in that moment that it was the man and the woman who had triumphed, and that for them the lady and the gentleman were dead.

"I'm not afraid—with you," she said again.

Her lips trembled, and her golden hair swept over his breast, and Thomas Jefferson Brown bent down and kissed her once upon the mouth. Then he said, as if he were speaking to a little girl:

"Do not be afraid, and hold to the edge of the canoe when it fills. The wind will carry us to Harrison's Island."

He turned to Lord Meton, and repeated the words; and just then the birchbark began to settle under them. With one hand gripping the

side, Thomas Jefferson Brown leaped over into the sea. Lower and lower settled the canoe until, with almost a scream, Lord Meton cried out above the wind:

"Good Lord, it won't hold us up!"

For a few moments Thomas Jefferson Brown relieved the canoe of his weight, and the birch-bark rose again, slowly. Then, with a great gasp, he clutched at the side again, and looked into Lady Isobel's drenched face, half hidden in the wet veil of her shining hair.

"The canoe won't hold us all up," he said, trying to smile. "But it will hold two—you two—and the wind is taking it to the island. It's four miles to the island, and I may be able to make it."

He knew that he never could make it; that no man could swim so far in the chill waters of Hudson Bay; but he spoke as if his words were truth. "I'm going to let go and try. Isobel, my one love, will you kiss me?"

She threw one arm about his neck. Lord Meton, clutching with frantic terror to the stern, saw nothing of what happened, nor did he hear the sobbing cry of Lady Isobel's heart as she kissed Thomas Jefferson Brown, once, twice, three times, before he dropped back into the sea again.

"Good-by, sweetheart!" he said.

In the eyes that looked up at her, in his face, in the one last look of love that he sent to her,

Lady Isobel saw the truth, and stretched out her arm to him.

"Stop! Come back! Take me with you!" she cried. "I want to go with you!"

And there, in the wildness of that sea, four miles from shore, Thomas Jefferson Brown seemed to heave himself up out of the water, as if the strength of a thousand swimmers had suddenly come to him. He let out a cry of triumph, of love, of joy; and he came back and gripped the canoe again, his gray eyes flashing, his face glowing with a strange flush.

"You want to go with me?" he said. "Come!"

He held up his arms, and with a cry that wasn't fear Lady Isobel went into them, while Thomas Jefferson Brown called to Lord Meton:

"Stick to the canoe! It will take you to the island!"

IV

The shore was a low, dark streak, four miles away—an appalling distance away; but as she clung lightly to his shoulders, as Thomas Jefferson Brown told her to do, the horror and the fear of the big sea went out of Lady Isobel's brave little heart. She put her face down against his neck, pulled back his wet hair, and kissed him. God bless all such true hearts, wherever they be!

"We'll make it, Tom—we'll make it!" she told him a hundred times.

He felt the warm caresses of her lips, the

thrilling love of her voice, and he knew that she was ready to die with him.

He swam in a strange way—a wonderfully strange way—did Thomas Jefferson Brown. He stood almost erect in the water, his head and shoulders clear; and now and then he stopped to rest, and it seemed no test for him at all to float with the weight of the woman he loved, his face turned up to her in those moments, her glorious blue eyes devouring him, her sweet lips kissing him—still kissing him.

He was doing a thing that she knew no other man in the world could do. She kept telling him so, while the land drew nearer and nearer, until at last she cried out in joy that she could see the little bushes along the shore.

"Another mile, Tom!" she said. "Only another mile, and then—"

"And then—" he said.

"And then—life!" she cried. "Life for you and me!"

He went on, seeming to grow stronger as the shore drew nearer. It was wonderful; but at last, when they came to the beach, he dropped down like a dead man. Lady Isobel caught his head to her dripping breast, and rocked him back and forth, sobbing a pæan of love and pride, while far out she saw the canoe and Lord Meton drifting shoreward.

A few minutes later, Thomas Jefferson Brown went out into the sea again, until he was not

much more than a speck, and brought in the canoe and Lord Meton, while Lady Isobel stood to her knees in the water, praising her God that from riches and splendor she had come out into a wilderness to find such a man as this.

After that, at York Factory, there was nothing left for Thomas Jefferson Brown to do but to reveal himself, and when Lord Meton discovered that there ran as good blood through his rescuer's veins as through his own, he gripped hands with the man who had saved him, and gave his congratulations on the spot. But it made no difference to Isobel. If anything, she was a little disappointed.

Thomas Jefferson Brown arranged to go back with them on their yacht. The wedding would take place in London, a quiet affair. One day Isobel and her lover came along hand in hand, and Thomas Jefferson Brown said to me:

"Bobby, you're going to be best man."

"Not best man," Lady Isobel added, "but second best, Bobby. There's only one best man in the world!"

But I haven't been able to come to the point of this story yet—the remarkable part of it. Two weeks later, when we were up the river and our canoe struck a snag, I discovered that Thomas Jefferson Brown *couldn't swim a stroke!*

"Good Lord!" I said, but waited.

Back at the post, Thomas Jefferson Brown took me into his little room, and said:

"Bobby, you've found that I can't swim, and I'm going to trust you with a great secret. Love can accomplish miracles; and love did—out there. For when I let go of the canoe, Bobby, I knew that I was going straight down to my death. But a wonderful thing happened." He brought a little map from a drawer. "Look at this map, Bobby. See all those little marks off Harrison's Island—figures—twos and threes and fives, and nothing above sixes? That's the depth of water for five miles out from Harrison's Island, at low tide; and it was low tide when I jumped from the canoe. That's all, Bobby. *I waded ashore.* But what would be the good of saying anything about it when it brought me love like hers?"

Yes, what would be the use? For Thomas Jefferson Brown stepped out deliberately to go to his death, and found life. He's a hero and a man, is Thomas Jefferson Brown, even if fate did step in to make heroism a little easy for him at the time!